No Defence

GILBERT PARKER

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NO DEFENCE

BY

GILBERT PARKER

Author of 'The Seats of the Mighty,' 'The Right of Way,'
'When Valmond came to Pontiac,'
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Contents

BOOK I

CHAP. PAGE

I THE TWO MEET 9
II THE COMING OF A MESSENGER . . . 24
III THE QUARREL 32
IV THE DUEL 39
V THE KILLING OF ERRIS BOYNE . . . 48
VI DYCK IN PRISON 63
VII MOTHER AND DAUGHTER 70
VIII DYCK'S FATHER VISITS HIM . . . 81
IX A LETTER FROM SHEILA 87

BOOK II

X DYCK CALHOUN ENTERS THE WORLD AGAIN . 93
XI WHITHER NOW? 101
XII THE HOUR BEFORE THE MUTINY . . . 108
XIII TO THE WEST INDIES 121
XIV IN THE NICK OF TIME 134
XV THE ADMIRAL HAS HIS SAY 149

BOOK III

CHAP. PAGE
XVI A LETTER 157
XVII STRANGERS ARRIVE 180
XVIII AT SALEM 197
XIX LORD MALLOW INTERVENES 221
XX OUT OF THE HANDS OF THE PHILISTINES . 245
XXI THE CLASH OF RACE 266
XXII SHEILA HAS HER SAY 275
XXIII THE COMING OF NOREEN 284
XXIV WITH THE GOVERNOR 292
XXV THEN WHAT HAPPENED 300

No Defence *Book I*

Chapter I *The Two Meet*

'WELL, good-bye, Dyck. I'll meet you at the sessions, or before that at the assizes.'

It was only the impulsive, cheery, warning exclamation of a wild young Irish spirit to his friend Dyck Calhoun, but it had behind it the humour and incongruity of Irish life.

The man, Dyck Calhoun, after whom were sent the daring words about the sessions and the assizes, was a year or two older than his friend, and, as Michael Clones, his servant and friend, said, 'the worst and best scamp of them all'—just up to any harmless deviltry.

Influenced by no traditions or customs, under control of no stern records of society, Calhoun had caused some trouble in his time by the harmless deeds of a scapegrace, but morally—that is, in all relations of life affected by the ten commandments—he was above reproach. Yet he was of the sort who, in days of agitation, then common in Ireland, might possibly commit some act which would bring him to the sessions or the assizes. There never was in Ireland a cheerier, braver, handsomer fellow, nor one with such variety of mind and complexity of purpose.

He was the only child of a high-placed gentleman; he spent all the money that came his way, and occasionally loaded himself with debt, which his angry father paid. Yet there never was a gayer heart, a more generous spirit, nor an easier-tempered man; though, after all, he was only twenty-five when the words with which the tale opens were said to him.

He had been successful—yet none too successful—at school and Trinity College, Dublin. He had taken a pass degree, when he might have captured the highest honours. He had interested people of place in the country, but he never used promptly the interest he excited. A pretty face, a fishing or a shooting expedition, a carouse in some secluded tavern, were parts of his daily life.

At the time the story opens he was a figure of note among those who spent their time in criticizing the government and damning the Irish Parliament. He even became a friend of some young hare-brained rebels of the time; yet no one suspected him of anything except irresponsibility. His record was clean; Dublin Castle was not after him.

When his young friend made the remark about the sessions and assizes, Calhoun was making his way up the rocky hillside to take the homeward path to his father's place, Playmore. With the challenge and the monstrous good-bye, a stone came flying up the hill after him and stopped almost at his feet. He made no reply, however, but waved a hand downhill, and in his heart said:

'Well, maybe he's right. I'm a damned dangerous fellow, there's no doubt about that. Perhaps I'll kill a rebel some day, and then they'll take me to the sessions and the assizes. Well, well, there's many a worse fate than that, so there is.'

After a minute he added:

'So there is, dear lad, so there is. But if I ever kill, I'd like it to be in open fight on the hills like this

—like this, under the bright sun, in the soft morning, with all the moor and valleys still, and the larks singing—the larks singing! Hooray, but it's a fine day, one of the best that ever was!'

He laughed, and patted his gun gently.

'Not a feather, not a bird killed, not a shot fired; but the looking was the thing—stalking the things that never turned up, the white heels we never saw, for I'm not killing larks, God love you!'

He raised his head, looking up into the sky at some larks singing above him in the heavens.

'God love you, little dears,' he added aloud. 'I wish I might die with your singing in my ears, but do you know what makes Ireland what it is? Look at it now. Years ago, just when the cotton-mills and the linen-mills were doing well, they came over with their English legislation, and made it hard going. When we begin to get something, over the English come and take the something away. What have we done, we Irish people, that we shouldn't have a chance in our own country? Lord knows, we deserve a chance, for it's hard paying the duties these days What with France in revolution and reaching out her hand to Ireland to coax her into rebellion; what with defeat in America and drink in Scotland; what with Fox and Pitt at each other's throats, and the lord-lieutenant a danger to the peace; what with poverty, and the cow and children and father and mother living all in one room, with the chickens roosting in the rafters; what with pointing the potato at the fried fish and gulping it down as if it was fish itself; what with the smell and the dirt and the poverty of Dublin and Derry, Limerick and Cork—ah, well!' He threw his eyes up again. 'Ah, well, my little love, sing on! You're a blessing among a lot of curses; but never mind, it's a fine world, and Ireland's the best part of it. Heaven knows it—and on this hill, how beautiful it is!'

He was now on the top of a hill where he could look out towards the bog and in toward the mellow, waving hills. He could drink in the yellowish green, with here and there in the distance a little house; and about two miles away smoke stealing up from the midst of the plantation where Playmore was—Playmore, his father's house—to be his own one day.

How good it was! There, within his sight, was the great escarpment of rock known as the Devil's Ledge, and away to the east was the black spot in the combe known as the Cave of Mary. Still farther away, toward the south, was the great cattle-pasture, where, as he looked, a thousand cattle roamed. Here and there in the wide prospect were plantations where Irish landlords lived, and paid a heavy price for living. Men did not pay their rents. Crops were spoiled, markets were bad, money was scarce, yet—

'Please God, it will be better next year!' Michael Clones said, and there never was a man with a more hopeful heart than Michael Clones.

Dyck Calhoun had a soul of character, originality, and wayward distinction. He had all the impulses and enthusiasms of a poet, all the thirst for excitement of the adventurer, all the latent patriotism of the true Celt; but his life was undisciplined, and he had not ordered his spirit into compartments of faith and hope. He had gifts. They were gifts only to be borne by those who had ambitions.

Now, as he looked out upon the scene where nature was showing herself at her best, some glimmer of a great future came to him. He did not know which way his feet were destined to travel in the business of life. It was too late to join the navy; but there was still time enough to be a soldier, or to learn to be a lawyer.

As he gazed upon the scene, his wonderful deep blue eyes, his dark brown hair thick upon his head, waving and luxuriant like a fine mattress, his tall, slender, alert figure, his bony, capable hands, which neither sun nor wind ever browned, his nervous yet interesting mouth, and his long Roman nose, set in a complexion rich in its pink-and-cream hardness and health—all this made him a figure good to see.

Suddenly, as he listened to the lark singing overhead, with his face lifted to the sky, he heard a human voice singing; and presently there ran up a little declivity to his left a girl—an Irish girl of about seventeen years of age.

Her hat was hanging on her arm by a green ribbon. Her head was covered with the most wonderful brown, waving hair. She had a broad, low forehead, Greek in its proportions and lines. The eyes were bluer even than his own, and were shaded by lashes of great length, which slightly modified the firm lines of the face, with its admirable chin, and mouth somewhat large with a cupid's bow.

In spite of its ardent and luscious look, it was the mouth of one who knew her own mind and could sustain her own course. It was open when Dyck first saw it, because she was singing little bits of wild lyrics of the hills, little tragedies of Celtic life—just bursts of the Celtic soul, as it were, cheerful yet sad, buoyant and passionate, eager yet melancholy. She was singing in Irish too. They were the words of songs taught her by her mother's maid.

She had been tramping over the hills for a couple of hours, virile, beautiful, and alone. She wore a gown of dark gold, with little green ribbons here and there. The gown was short, and her ankles showed. In spite of the strong boots she wore they were alert, delicate, and shapely, and all her beauty had the slender fullness of a quail.

When she saw Dyck, she stopped suddenly, her mouth slightly open. She gave him a sidelong glance of wonder, interest, and speculation. Then she threw her head slightly back, and all the curls gathered in a bunch and shook like bronze flowers. It was a head of grace and power, of charm and allurement—of danger.

Dyck was lost in admiration. He looked at her as one might look at a beautiful thing in a dream. He did not speak ; he only smiled as he gazed into her eyes.

She was the first to speak.

'Well, who are you ?' she asked with a slightly southern accent in her voice, delicate and entrancing.

Her head gave a little modest toss, her fine white teeth caught her lower lip with a little quirk of humour ; for she could see that he was a gentleman, and that she was safe from anything that might trouble her.

He replied to her question with the words :

'My name ? Why, it's Dyck Calhoun. That's all.'

Her eyes brightened. 'Isn't that enough ?' she asked gently.

She knew of his family. She was only visiting in the district with her mother, but she had lately heard of old Miles Calhoun and his wayward boy, Dyck ; and here was Dyck, with a humour in his eyes and a touch of melancholy at his lips. Somehow her heart went out to him.

Presently he said to her :

'And what's your name ?'

'I'm only Sheila Llyn, the daughter of my mother, a widow, visiting at Loyland Towers. Yes, I'm only Sheila!'

She laughed.

'Well, just be "only Sheila,"' he answered admiringly, and he held out a hand to her. 'I wouldn't have you be anything else, though it's none of my business.'

For one swift instant she hesitated; then she laid her hand in his.

'There's no reason why we should not,' she said. 'Your father's respectable.'

She looked at him again with a sidelong glance, and with a whimsical, reserved smile at her lips.

'Yes, he's respectable, I agree, but he's dull,' answered Dyck. 'For an Irishman, he's dull—and he's a tyrant, too. I suppose I deserve that, for I'm a handful.'

'I think you are, and a big handful too!'

'Which way are you going?' he asked presently.

'And you?'

'Oh, I'm bound for home.' He pointed across the valley. 'Do you see that smoke coming up from the plantation over there?'

'Yes, I know,' she answered. 'I know. That's Playmore, your father's place. Loyland Towers is between here and there. Which way *were* you going there?'

'Round to the left,' he said, puzzled, but agreeable.

'Then we must say good-bye, because I go to the right. That's my nearest way.'

'Well, if that's your nearest way, I'm going with you,' he said, 'because—well, because—because——'

'If you won't talk very much!' she rejoined with a little air of instinctive coquetry.

'I don't want to talk. I'd like to listen. Shall we start?'

A half-hour later they suddenly came upon an incident of the road.

It was, alas, no uncommon incident. An aged peasant, in a sudden fit of weakness, had stumbled on the road, and, in falling, had struck his head on a stone and had lost consciousness. He was an old peasant of the usual Irish type, coarsely but cleanly dressed. Lying beside him was a leather bag, within which were odds and ends of food and some small books of legend and ritual. He was a peasant of a superior class, however.

In falling, he had thrown over on his back, and his haggard face was exposed to the sun and sky. At sight of him Dyck and Sheila ran forward. Dyck dropped on one knee, and placed a hand on the stricken man's heart.

'He's alive, all right,' Dyck said. 'He's a figure in these parts. His name's Christopher Dogan.'

'Where does he live?'

'Live? Well, not three hundred yards from here, when he's at home, but he's generally on the go. He's what the American Indians would call a medicine-man.'

'He needs to take his own medicine now.'

'He's over eighty, and he must have gone dizzy, stumbled, fallen, and struck a stone. There's the mark on his temple. He's been lying here unconscious ever since; but his pulse is all right, and we'll have him fit again soon.'

So saying, Dyck whipped out a horn containing spirit, and, while Sheila lifted the injured head, he bathed the old man's face with the spirit, then opened the mouth and let some liquor trickle down.

'He's the cleanest peasant I ever saw,' remarked Sheila; 'and he's coming to. Look at him!'

Yes, he was coming to. There was a slight tremor of the eyelids, and presently they slowly opened. They were eyes of remarkable poignancy and brightness—black, deep-set, direct, full of native intelligence. For an instant they stared as if they had no knowledge, then understanding came to them.

'Oh, it's you, sir,' his voice said tremblingly, looking at Dyck. 'And very kind it is of ye!' Then he looked at Sheila. 'I don't know ye,' he said whisperingly, for his voice seemed suddenly to fail. 'I don't know ye,' he repeated, 'but you look all right.'

'Well, I'm Sheila Llyn,' the girl said, taking her hand from the old man's shoulder. 'I'm Sheila Llyn, and I'm all right in a way, I think.'

The troubled, piercing eyes glanced from one to the other.

'No relation?'

'No—never met till a half-hour ago,' remarked Dyck. 'We were strangers till then.'

The old man drew himself to a sitting posture, then swayed slightly. The hands of the girl and Dyck went out behind his back. As they touched his back, their fingers met, and Dyck's covered the girl's. Their eyes met, too, and the story told by Dyck in that moment was the beginning of a lifetime of experience, comedy, and tragedy.

He thought her fingers were wonderfully soft, warm, and full of life; and she thought that his was the hand of a master—of a master in the field of human relation. That is, if she thought at all, for Dyck's warm, powerful touch almost hypnotized her.

The old peasant understood, however. He was standing on his feet now. He was pale and uncertain.

He lifted up his bag, and threw it over his shoulder.

'Well, I'm not needing you any more, thank God!' he said. 'So Heaven's blessing on ye, and I bid ye good-bye. You've been kind to me, and I won't forget either of ye. If ever I can do ye a good turn, I'll do it.'

'Oh, no, we're not going to leave you until you're inside your home,' said Dyck.

The old man looked at Sheila in meditation. He knew her name and her history. Behind the girl's life was a long prospect of mystery. Llyn was her mother's maiden name. Sheila had never known her father. Never to her knowledge had she seen him, because when she was yet an infant her mother had divorced him by Act of Parliament, against the wishes of her church, and had resumed her maiden name.

Sheila's father's name was Erris Boyne, and he had been debauched, drunken, and faithless; so at a time of unendurable hurt his wife had freed herself. Then, under the egis of her maiden name, she had brought up her daughter without any knowledge of her father; had made her believe he was dead; had hidden her tragedy with a skilful hand.

Only now, when Sheila was released from a governess, had she moved out of the little wild area of the County Limerick where she lived; only now had she come to visit an uncle whose hospitality she had for so many years denied herself. Sheila was two years old when her father disappeared, and fifteen years had gone since then.

One on either side of the old man, they went with him up the hillside for about three hundred yards, to the door of his house, which was little more than a cave in a sudden lift of the hill. He swayed as he walked, but by the time they reached his cave-house he was alert again.

The house had two windows, one on either side of the unlocked doorway; and when the old man slowly swung the door open, there was shown an interior of humble character, but neat and well-ordered. The floor was earth, dry and clean. There was a bed to the right, also wholesome and dry, with horse-blankets for cover. At the back, opposite the doorway, was a fireplace of some size, and in it stood a kettle, a pot, and a few small pans, together with a covered saucepan. On either side of the fireplace was a three-legged stool, and about the middle of the left-hand wall of the room was a chair which had been made out of a barrel, some of the staves having been sawn away to make a seat.

Once inside the house, Christopher Dogan laid his bag on the bed and waved his hands in a formula of welcome.

'Well, I'm honoured,' he said, 'for no one has set foot inside this place that I'd rather have here than the two of ye; and it's wonderful to me, Mr. Calhoun, that ye've never been inside it before, because there's been times when I've had food and drink in plenty. I could have made ye comfortable then and stroked ye all down yer gullet. As for you, Miss Llyn, you're as welcome as the shining of the stars of a night when there's no moon. I'm glad you're here, though I've nothing to give ye, not a bite nor sup. Ah, yes—but yes,' he suddenly cried, touching his head. 'Faith, then, I have! I have a drap of somethin' that's as good as anything dhrunk by the ancient kings of Ireland. It's a wee cordial that come from the cellars of the Bishop of Dunlany, when I cured his cook of the evil-stone that was killing her. Ah, thank God!'

He went into a corner on the left of the fireplace,

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opened an old jar, thrust his arm down, and drew out a squat little bottle of cordial. The bottle was beautifully made. It was round and hunched, and of glass, with an old label from which the writing had faded.

With eyes bright now, Christopher uncorked the bottle and smelled the contents. As he did so, a smile of good cheer crinkled his face.

'Thank the Lord! There's enough for the two of ye—two fine tablespoonfuls of the cordial that'd do anny man good, no matter how bad he was, and turn an angel of a woman into an archangel. Bless yer sowl!'

When Christopher turned to lift down two pewter pots, Calhoun reached up swiftly and took them from the shelf. He placed them in the hands of the old man, who drew a clean towel of coarse linen from a small cupboard in the wall above his head.

She and Dyck held the pots for the old man to pour the cordial into them. As he said, there was only a good porridge-spoon of liqueur for each. He divided it with anxious care.

'There's manny a man,' he said, 'and manny and manny a lady, too, born in the purple, that 'd be glad of a dhrink of this cordial from the cellar of the bishop. *Alpha, beta, gamma, delta* is the code, and with the word *delta*,' he continued, 'dhrink every drop of it, as if it was the last thing you were dhrinking on earth; as if the Lord stooped down to give ye a cup of blessing from His great flagon of eternal happiness. Ye've got two kind hearts, but there's manny a day of throuble will come between ye and the end; and yet the end 'll be right, God love ye! Now—*alpha, beta, gamma, delta!*'

With a merry laugh Dyck Calhoun turned up his cup and drained the liquid to the last drop. With a laugh not quite so merry, Sheila raised her mug and slowly drained the green happiness away.

'Isn't it good—isn't it like the love of God?' asked the old man. 'Ain't I glad I had it for ye? Why I said I hadn't annything for ye to dhrink or eat, God only knows. There's nothing to eat, and there's only this to dhrink, and I hide it away under the bedclothes of time, as one might say. Ah, ye know, it's been there for three years, and I'd almost forgot it. It was a little angel from heaven whispered it to me whin ye stepped inside this house. I dunno why I kep' the stuff. Manny's the time I was tempted to dhrink it myself, and manny's the time something said to me, "Not yet." The Lord be praised, for I've had out of it more than I deserve!'

He took the mugs from their hands, and for a minute stood like some ancient priest who had performed a noble ritual. As Sheila looked at him, she kept saying to herself:

'He's a spirit; he isn't a man!'

Dyck's eye met that of Sheila, and he saw with the same feeling what was working in her heart.

'Well, we must be going,' he said to Christopher Dogan. 'We must get homeward, and we've had a good drink—the best I ever tasted. We're proud to pay our respects to you in your own house; and good-bye to you till we meet again.'

His hand went out to the shoulder of the peasant and rested there for a second in friendly feeling. Then the girl stretched out her hand also. The old man took the two cups in one hand, and, reaching out the other, let Sheila's fingers fall upon his own. He slowly crooked his neck, and kissed her fingers with that distinction mostly to be found among those few good people who live on the highest or the lowest social levels, or in native tents.

'Ah, please God we meet again! and that I be let to serve you, Miss Sheila Llyn. I have no doubt you could do with a little help some time or another, the same as the rest of us. For all that's come between us three, may it be given me, humble and poor, to help ye both that's helped me so!'

Dyck turned to go, and as he did so a thought came to him.

'If you hadn't food and drink for us, what have you for yourself, Christopher?' he asked. 'Have you food to eat?'

'Ah, well—well, do ye think I'm no provider? There was no food cooked was what I was thinking; but come and let me show you.'

He took the cover off a jar standing in a corner.

'Here's good flour, and there's water, and there's manny a wild shrub and plant on the hillside to make soup, and what more does a man want? With the scone cooked and inside ye, don't ye feel as well as though ye'd had a pound of beef or a rasher of bacon? Sure, ye do. I know where there's clumps of wild radishes, and with a little salt they're good—the best. God bless ye!'

A few moments later, as he stood in his doorway and looked along the road, he saw two figures, the girl's head hardly higher then the man's shoulder. They walked as if they had much to get and were ready for it.

'Well, I dunno,' he said to himself. 'I dunno about you, Dyck Calhoun. You're wild, and ye have too manny mad friends, but you'll come all right in the end; and that pretty girl—God save her!—she'll come with a smile into your arms by and by, dear lad. But ye have far to go and much to do before that.'

His head fell, his eyes stared out into the shining distance.

'I see for ye manny and manny a stroke of bad luck, and manny a wrong thing said of ye, and she not believing wan of them. But oh, my God, but oh!' —his clenched hands went to his eyes—'I wouldn't like to travel the path that's before ye—no!'

Down the long road the two young people travelled, gossiping much, both of them touched by something sad and mysterious, neither knowing why; both of them happy, too, for somehow they had come nearer together than years of ordinary life might have made possible. They thought of the old man and his hut, and then broke away into talk of their own countryside, of the war with France, of the growing rebellious spirit in Ireland, of riots in Dublin town, of trouble at Limerick, Cork, and Sligo.

At the gate of the mansion where Sheila was visiting, Dyck put into her hands the wild flowers he had picked as they passed, and said:

'Well, it's been a great day. I've never had a greater. Let's meet again, and soon! I'm almost every day upon the hill with my gun, and it'd be worth a lot to see you soon—very soon.'

'Oh, you'll be forgetting me by to-morrow,' the girl said with a little wistfulness at her lips, for she had a feeling they would not meet on the morrow. Suddenly she picked from the bunch of wild flowers he had given her a little sprig of heather.

'Well, if we don't meet—wear that,' she said, and, laughing over her shoulder, turned and ran into the grounds of Loyland Towers.

Chapter II *The Coming of a Messenger*

WHEN Dyck entered the library of Playmore, the first words he heard were these:

'Howe has licked the French at Brest. He's smashed the French fleet and dealt a sharp blow to the revolution. Hurrah!'

The words were used by Miles Calhoun, Dyck's father, as a greeting to him on his return from the day's sport.

Now, if there was a man in Ireland who had a narrow view and kept his toes pointed to the front, it was Miles Calhoun. His people had lived in Connemara for hundreds of years; and he himself had only one passion in life, which was the Protestant passion of prejudice. He had ever been a follower of Burke—a passionate follower, one who believed the French Revolution was a crime against humanity, a danger to the future of civilization, a miserable orgy of unworthy millions.

He had resisted more vigorously than most men the progress of revolutionary sentiments in Ireland. He was aware that his son had far less rigid opinions than himself; that he even defended Wolfe Tone and Thomas Emmet against abuse and damnation. That was why he had delight in slapping his son in the face, whenever possible, with the hot pennant of victory for British power.

He was a man of irascible temperament and stern views, given to fits of exasperation. He was small of stature, with a round face, eyes that suddenly went red with feeling, and with none of the handsomeness of his son, who resembled his mother's side of the family.

The mother herself had been a beautiful and remarkable woman. Dyck was, in a sense, a reproduction of her in body and mind, for a more cheerful and impetuous person never made a household happier or more imperfect than she made hers.

Her beauty and continual cheerfulness had always been the joy of Dyck's life, and because his mother had married his father—she was a woman of sense, with all her lightsome ways—he tried to regard his father with profound respect. Since his wife's death, however, Miles Calhoun had steadily deteriorated; he had become unreasonable.

As the elder Calhoun made his announcement about the battle of Brest and the English victory, a triumphant smile lighted his flushed face, and under his heavy grey brows his eyes danced with malicious joy.

'Howe's a wonder!' he said. 'He'll make those savage, mad, red republicans hunt their holes. Eh isn't that your view, Ivy?' he asked of a naval captain who had evidently brought the news.

Captain Ivy nodded.

'Yes, it's a heavy blow for the French bloodsuckers. If their ideas creep through Europe and get hold of England, God only knows what the end will be! In their view, to alter everything that exists is the only way to put things right. No doubt they'll invent a new way to be born before they've finished.'

'Well, that wouldn't be a bad idea,' remarked Dyck. 'The present way has its demerits.'

'Yes, it throws responsibility upon the man, and gives a heap of trouble to the woman,' said Captain Ivy with a laugh; 'but they'll change it all, you'll see.'

Dyck poured himself a glass of port, held it up, sniffed the aroma, and looked through the beautiful red tinge of the wine with a happy and critical eye.

'Well, there are lots of ways in which the world could be remade,' he declared. 'I shouldn't mind seeing a bit of a revolution in Ireland—but in England first,' he hastened to add. 'They're a more outcast folk than the Irish.'

His father scoffed.

'Look out, Dyck, or they'll drop you in jail if you talk like that!' he chided, his red face growing redder, his fingers nervously feeling the buttons on his picturesque silk waistcoat. 'There's conspiracy in Ireland, and you never truly know if the man that serves you at your table, or brings you your horse, or puts a spade into your ground, isn't a traitor.'

At that moment the door opened, and a servant entered the room. In his hand he carried a letter which, with marked excitement, he brought to Miles Calhoun.

'Sure, he's waiting, sir,' he said.

'And who's he?' asked his master, turning the letter over, as though to find out by looking at the seal.

'Oh, a man of consequence, if we're to judge by the way he's clothed.'

'Fit company, then?' his master asked, as he began to open the heavily sealed letter.

'Well, I'm not saying that, for there's no company good enough for us,' answered the higgledy-piggledy butler, with a quirk of the mouth; 'but, as messengers go, I never seen one with more style and point.'

'Well, bring him to me,' said Miles Calhoun. 'Bring him to me, and I'll form my own judgment—though I have some confidence in yours.'

'You could go further and fare worse, as the Papists say about purgatory,' answered the old man with respectful familiarity.

Captain Ivy and Dyck grinned, but the head of the house seemed none too pleased at the freedom of the old butler.

'Bring him as he is,' said Miles Calhoun, and broke the seal of the letter in his hand. 'Good God!' he added, doing so, for he had just realized that the stamp of the seal was that of the Attorney-General of Ireland.

Then he opened the letter and read it. A flush swept over his face, making its red almost purple.

'Eternal damnation—eternal damnation!' he declared, holding the paper at arm's length, inspecting it. He then handed it to Dyck. 'Read that, lad. Then pack your bag, for we start for Dublin by daylight or before.'

Dyck read the brief document and whistled softly to himself.

'Well, well, you've got to obey orders like that, I suppose,' Dyck said. 'They want to question us as to the state of the country here.'

'I think we can tell them something. I wonder if they know how wide your travel is, how many people you see; and if they know, how did they come to know? There's spies all over the place. How do I know but the man who's just left this room isn't a spy, isn't the enemy of all of us here?'

'I'd suspect Michael Clones,' remarked Dyck, 'just as soon as Mulvaney.'

'Michael Clones,' said his father, and he turned to

Captain Ivy, ' Michael Clones I'd trust as I'd trust His blessed majesty, George III. He's a rare scamp, is Michael Clones! He's no thicker than a cardboard, but he draws the pain out of your hurt like a mustard plaster. A man of better sense and greater roguery I've never met. You must see him, Captain Ivy. He's only about twelve years older than my son, but, like my son, there's no holding him, there's no control of him that's any good. He does what he wants to do in his own way—talks when he wants to talk, fights when he wants to fight. He's a man of men, is Michael Clones.'

At that moment the door opened and the butler entered, followed by a tall, thin, *Don Quixote* sort of figure.

' His excellency,' said Mulvaney, with a look slightly malevolent, for the visitor had refused his name. Then he turned and left the room.

At Mulvaney's words, an ironical smile crossed the face of the newcomer. Then he advanced to Miles Calhoun. Before speaking, however, he glanced sharply at Captain Ivy, threw an inquisitive look at Dyck, and said:

' I seem to have hurt the feelings of your butler, sir, but that cannot be helped. I have come from the Attorney-General. My name is Leonard Mallow—I'm the eldest son of Lord Mallow. I've been doing business in Limerick, and I bring a message from the Attorney-General to ask you to attend his office at the earliest moment.'

Dyck Calhoun, noting his glance at a bottle of port, poured out a glass of the good wine and handed it over, saying:

' It'll taste better to you because you've been travelling hard, but it's good wine anyhow. It's been in the cellar for forty years, and that's something in a land like this.'

Mallow accepted the glass of port, raised it with a little gesture of respect, and said:

'Long life to the King, and cursed be his enemies!'

So saying he flung the wine down his throat—which seemed to gulp it like a well—wiped his lips with a lace handkerchief, and turned to Miles Calhoun again.

'Yes, it's good wine," he said; 'as good as you'd get in the cellars of the Viceroy. I've seen strange things as I came. I've seen lights on the hills, and drunken rioters in the roads and behind hedges, and once a shot was fired at me; but here I am, safe and sound, carrying out my orders. What time will you start?' he added.

He took it for granted that the summons did not admit of rejection, and he was right. The document contained these words:

'Trouble is brewing; indeed, it is at hand. Come, please, at once to Dublin, and give the Lord-Lieutenant and the Government a report upon your district. We do not hear altogether well of it, but we are aware that no one has the knowledge you possess. In the name of His Majesty you are hereby asked to present yourself at once at these offices in Dublin, and be assured that the Lord-Lieutenant will give you warm welcome through me. Your own loyalty gives much satisfaction here, and if you can bring useful information much good may ensue. I am, sir,

'Your obedient servant,

'JOHN MCNOWELL.'

'You have confidence in the people's loyalty here?' asked Mallow.

'As great as in my own,' answered Dyck cheerily.

'Well, you ought to know what that is. At the same time, I've heard you're a friend of one or two dark spirits in the land.'

'I hold no friendships that would do hurt to my country,' answered Dyck sharply.

Mallow smiled satirically. 'As we're starting at daylight, I suppose, I think I'll go to bed, if it may be you can put me up.'

'Oh, Lord, yes! We can put you up, Mr. Mallow,' remarked the old man. 'You shall have as good a bed as you can find outside the Viceregal Lodge—a four-poster, very wide and very long. It's been slept in by many a man of place and power. But, Mr. Mallow, you haven't announced that you've had no dinner, and you'll not be going to bed in this house without your food. Did you shoot anything to-day, Dyck?' he asked his son.

'I didn't bring home a feather. There were no birds to-day, but there are the ducks I shot yesterday, and the quail.'

'Oh, yes,' said his father, 'and there's the little roast pig, too. This is a day when we celebrate the anniversary of Irish power and life.'

'What's that?' asked Mallow.

'That's the battle of the Boyne,' answered his host with a little air of ostentation.

'Oh, you're one of the Peep-o'-Day Boys, then,' remarked Mallow.

'I'm not saying that,' answered the old man. 'I'm not an Ulsterman, but I celebrate the coming of William to the Boyne. Things were done that day that'll be remembered when Ireland is whisked away into the Kingdom of Heaven. So you'll not go to bed till you've had dinner, Mr. Mallow! By me soul, I think

I smell the little porker now. Dinner at five, to bed at eight, up before daylight, and off to Dublin when the light breaks. That's the course!' He turned to Captain Ivy. 'I'm sorry, captain, but there's naught else to do, and you were going to-morrow at noon, anyhow, so it won't make much difference to you.'

'It will make no difference whatever,' replied the sailorman. 'I have to go to Dublin, too, and from there to Queenstown to join my ship, and from Queenstown to the coast of France to do some fighting.'

'Please God!' remarked Miles Calhoun.

'So be it!' declared Mallow.

'Amen!' said Dyck.

Once again Dyck looked the visitor straight in the eyes, and far back in the horizon of Mallow's life-sky there shone for an instant the light of an evil star.

'There's the call to dinner,' remarked Miles Calhoun, as a bell began ringing in the tower outside. 'Come with me, Mr. Mallow, and I'll show you your room. You've had your horse put up, I hope?'

'Yes, and my bag brought in.'

'Well, come along, then. There's no time to lose. I can smell the young hog crawling out of the oven.'

'You're a master of tempting thoughts,' remarked Mallow enthusiastically.

'Sheila—Sheila!' said Dyck Calhoun to himself where he stood.

LIBRARY, SPIN

Chapter III *The Quarrel*

THE journey to Dublin was made by the Calhouns, their two guests, and Michael Clones, without incident of note. Arrived there, Miles Calhoun gave himself to examination by Government officials and to assisting the designs of the Peep-o'-Day Boys; and indeed he was present at the formation of the first Orange Lodge.

His narrow nature, his petty craft and malevolence, were useful in a time of anxiety for the State. Yet he had not enough ability to develop his position by the chances offered him. He had not a touch of genius; he had only bursts of Celtic passion, which he had not mind enough to control.

Indeed, as days, weeks and months went on, his position became less valuable to himself, and his financial affairs suffered from his own and his agent's bad management. In his particular district he was a power; in Dublin he soon showed the weaker side of his nature. He had a bad habit of making foes where he could easily have made friends. In his personal habits he was sober, but erratic. No meal was ever served twice at the same hour in the same week. The lodgings he rented in Dublin had few conveniences, but they might have served, had his own capacity been greater.

Dyck had not his father's abstention from the luxuries of life. He drank, he gamed, he went where temptation was, and fell into it. He steadily diminished his powers of resistance to self-indulgence until one day, at a tavern, he met a man who made a great impression upon him.

This man was brilliant, ebullient, full of humour, character and life, knowing apparently all the lower world of Dublin, and moving with an assured step. It was Erris Boyne, the divorced husband of Mrs. Llyn and the father of Sheila Llyn; but this fact was not known to Dyck. There was also a chance of its not becoming known, because so many years had passed since Erris Boyne was divorced. People seemed to take no notice of what he did or said, save in the flash and enjoyment of the moment.

One day Erris Boyne said to Dyck:

'There's a supper to-night at the Breakneck Club. Come along and have a skinful. You'll meet people worth knowing. They're a damned fine lot of fellows for you to meet, Calhoun!'

'The Breakneck Club isn't a good name for a first-class institution,' remarked Dyck, with a pause and a laugh; 'but I'll come, if you'll fetch me.'

Erris Boyne, who was eighteen years older than Dyck, laughed, flicked a little pinch of snuff at his nose with his finger.

'Dear lad, of course I'll come and fetch you,' he said. 'There's many a man has done worse than lead a gay stripling like you into pleasant ways. Bring along any loose change you have, for it may be a night of nights.'

'Oh, they play cards, do they, at the Breakneck Club?' said Dyck, alive with interest.

'Well, call it what you like, but men must do something when they get together, and we can't be talking all the time. So pocket your shillings. It's the best place to come to ever an honest man had.'

'Are they all the right sort?' asked Dyck, with a little touch of malice. 'I mean, are they loyal and true?'

Erris Boyne laid a hand on Dyck's arm.

'Come and find out. Do you think I'd lead you into bad company? Of course Emmet and Wolfe Tone won't be there, nor any of that lot; but there'll be some men of the right stamp.' He watched Dyck carefully out of the corner of his eye. 'It's funny,' he added, 'that in Ireland the word loyal always means being true to the Union Jack, standing by King George and his crowd.'

'Well, what would you have?' said Dyck. 'For this is a day and age when being loyal to the King is more than aught else in all the Irish world. We're never two days alike, we Irish. There are the United Irishmen and the Defenders on one side, and the Peep-o'-Day Boys, or Orangemen, on the other—Catholic and Protestant, at each other's throats. Then there's a hand thrust in, and up goes the sword, and the rifles, pikes, and bayonets; and those that were ready to mutilate or kill each other fall into each other's arms.'

Erris Boyne laughed. 'Well, there'll soon be an end to that. The Irish Parliament is slipping into disrepute. It wouldn't surprise me if the astute English bribe them into a union, to the ruin of Irish Independence. Yet maybe, before that comes, the French will have a try for power here. And upon my word, if I have to live under foreign rule, I'd as leave have a French whip over me as an English!' He came a step nearer, his voice lowered a little. 'Have you heard the latest news from France? They're coming with a good-sized fleet down to the south coast. Have you heard it ? '

' Oh, there's plenty one hears one doesn't believe is gospel,' answered Dyck, his eyes half closing. ' I'm not believing all I hear, as if it was a prayer-meeting. Anything may happen here ; Ireland's a woman—very uncertain.'

Dyck flicked some dust from his waistcoat, and dropped his eyes, because he was thinking of two women he had known ; one of them an angel now in company of her sister angels—his mother ; the other a girl he had met on the hills of Connemara, a wonderfully pretty girl of seventeen. How should he know that the girl was Erris Boyne's daughter ?—although there were times when some gesture of Boyne, some quick look, some lifting of the eyebrows, brought back the memory of Sheila Llyn, as it did now.

Since Dyck left his old home he had seen her twice ; once at Loyland Towers, and once at her home in Limerick. The time he had spent with her had been very brief, but full of life, interest, and character. She was like some piquant child, bold, beautiful, uncertain, caressing in her manner one instant, and distant at another.

She had said radiant things, had rallied him, had shown him where a twenty-nine-pound salmon had been caught in a stream, and had fired at and brought down a pheasant outside the covert at Loyland Towers. Whether at Loyland Towers, or at her mother's house in Limerick, there was no touch of forwardness in her, or in anything she said or did. She was the most natural being, the freest from affectation, he had ever known.

As Erris Boyne talked to him, the memory of Sheila flooded his mind, and on the flood his senses swam like swans. He had not her careful composure. He was just as real, but he had the wilfulness of man. She influenced him as no woman had ever yet done; but he saw no happy ending to the dream. He was too poor to marry; he had no trade or profession; his father's affairs were in a bad way. He could not bring himself to join the army or the navy; and yet, as an Irishman moved by political ideals, with views at once critical and yet devoted to the crown, he was not in a state to settle down.

He did not know that Erris Boyne was set to capture him for the rebel cause. How could he know that Boyne was an agent of the most evil forces in Ireland—an agent of skill and address, prepossessing, with the face of a Celtic poet and the eye of an assassin?

Boyne's object was to bring about the downfall of Dyck Calhoun—that is, his downfall as a patriot. At the Breakneck Club this bad business began. Dyck had seen many people, representing the gaiety and deviltry of life; but it was as though many doubtful people, many reckless ones, all those with purposes, fads, and fancies, were there. Here was an irresponsible member of a Government department; there an officer of His Majesty's troops; beyond, a profligate bachelor whose reputation for traitorous diplomacy was known and feared. Yet everywhere were men known in the sporting, gaming, or political world, in sealife or landlife, most of whom had a character untouched by criticism.

It was at this club that Dyck again met that tall, ascetic messenger from the Attorney-General, who had brought the message to Miles Calhoun. It was with this man—Leonard Mallow, eldest son of Lord Mallow—that Dyck, with three others, played cards one afternoon.

The instinctive antipathy which had marked their first introduction was carried on to this later meeting. Dyck distrusted Mallow, and allowed his distrust exercise. It was unfortunate that Mallow won from him three-fourths of the money he had brought to the club, and won it with a smile not easy to forgive.

Dyck had at last secured a real success in a scheme of his cards when Mallow asked with a sneer:

'Did you learn that at your home in heaven?'

'Don't they teach it where you live in hell?' was Dyck's reply.

At this Mallow flicked Dyck across the face with his handkerchief.

'That's what they teach where I belong.'

'Well, it's easy to learn, and we'll do the sum at any time or place you please.' After a moment Dyck continued: 'I wouldn't make a fuss over it. Let's finish the game. There's no good prancing till the sport's ready; so I'll sit and learn more of what they teach in hell!'

Dyck had been drinking, or he would not have spoken so; and when he was drunk daring was strong in him. He hated profoundly this man—so self-satisfied and satanic.

He kept a perfect coolness, however. Leonard Mallow should not see that he was upset. His wanton wordiness came to his rescue, and until the end of the game he played with sang-froid, daring, and skill. He loved cards; he loved the strife of skill against skill, of trick against trick, of hand against hand. He had never fought a duel in his life, but he had no fear of doing so.

At length, having won back nearly all he had lost, he rose to his feet and looked round.

‘Is there any one here from whom I can ask a favour?’

Several stepped forward. Dyck nodded. One of them he knew. It was Sir Almeric Foyle.

‘Thank you, Sir Almeric,’ he said; ‘thank you. Shall it be swords or pistols?’ he asked his enemy, coolly.

‘Swords, if you please,’ remarked Mallow grimly, for he had a gift with the sword.

Dyck nodded again.

‘As you will. As you will!’

Chapter IV *The Duel*

IT was a morning such as could only be conjured into existence by the Maker of mornings in Ireland. It was a day such as Dublin placed away carefully into the pantechnicon of famous archives.

The city of Dublin was not always clean, but in the bright, gorgeous sun her natural filth was no menace to the eye, no repulse to the senses. Above the Liffey, even at so early an hour, the heat shimmers like a silver mist. The bells of churches were ringing, and the great cathedral bells boomed in thrilling monotony over the peaceful city. Here and there in the shabby yet renowned streets, horsemen moved along; here and there the costermonger raised his cry of fresh fruit, flowers, and ‘ distinguished vegetables.’

People moved into church doorways on their way to mass or confession—some bright and rather gorgeous specimens of humanity, some in deep mourning, shy, reserved, and obscure. Here and there, also, in certain official streets—where officials lived or worked—were soldiers afoot; soldiers with carbines and long bayonets, with tall, slightly peaked hats, smart red coats with epaulets, belts crossing their breasts, knee-breeches and leggings, and all with epaulets shining. They were in marked contrast to the peasant folk with the high-peaked soft hat, knee-breeches, rough tail-coat, and stockings, some with rifles, some with pikes, some with powder-horns slung under their arms or in the small of the back.

Besides this show of foot-soldiers—that is, regulars and irregulars of the Cornwallis Regiment, and men of the Defenders and the Peep-o'-Day Boys—there were little groups of cavalry making their way to the parade-ground, the castle, the barracks, or the courts.

Beyond these there was the jaunting-car trundling over the rough cobblestone street, or bumping in and out of dangerous holes. Whips cracked, and the loud voices of jarveys shouted blatant humour and Irish fun at horse and passenger. Here and there, also, some stately coach, bedizened with the arms of the quality, made its way lumberingly through the chief streets, or across the bridges of the Liffey.

Then came the general population, moving cheerfully in the inspiriting sun ; for Irishmen move so much in a moist atmosphere that on a sunshiny day all the *tristesse* of life seems to be changed, as in a flash, into high spirits and much activity. Not that the country, at its worst, is slow-footed or depressed ; for wit is always at the elbow of want.

Never in all Ireland's years had she a more beautiful day than that in which Dyck Calhoun and the Hon. Leonard Mallow met to settle their account in a secluded corner of Phœnix Park. It was not the usual place for duels. The seconds had taken care to keep the locale from the knowledge of the public ; especially as many who had come to know of the event at the Breakneck Club were eager to be present.

The affair began an hour after sunrise. Neither Dyck nor Leonard Mallow slept at home the night before, but in separate taverns near Phœnix Park. Mallow came almost jauntily to the obscure spot. Both men had sensitiveness, and both entered the grounds with a certain thrill of pleasure softening the acerbity of the moment.

Dyck moved and spoke like a man charged with some fluid which had abstracted him from life's monotonous routine. He had to consider the chance of never leaving the grounds alive; yet as he entered the place, where smooth grass between the trees made good footing for the work to be done, the thrill of the greenery, the sound of the birds, the flick of a lizard across the path, and the distant gay leap of a young deer, brought to his senses a gust of joyous feeling.

'I never smelled such air!' he said to one of the seconds. 'I never saw the sun so beautiful!' He sniffed the air and turned his face towards the sun. 'Well, it's a day for Ireland,' he added, in response to a gravely playful remark of Sir Almeric Foyle. 'Ireland never was so sweet. Nature's provoking us!'

'Yes, it's a pity,' said Sir Almeric. 'But I'm not thinking of any bad luck for you, Calhoun.'

Dyck's smile was like that of one smiling from infinite distance. He was not normal; he was submerged. He was in the great, consuming atmosphere of the bigger world, and the greater life. He even did not hate Mallow at the moment. The thing about to be done was to him a test of manhood. It was a call upon the courage of the soul, a challenge of life, strength, and will.

As Mallow entered the grounds, the thought of Sheila Llyn crossed Dyck's mind, and the mental sight of her gladdened the eyes of his soul. For one brief instant he stood lost in the mind's look; then he stepped forward, saluted, shook hands with Mallow, and doffed his coat and waistcoat.

As he did so, he was conscious of a curious coldness, even of dampness, in the hand which had shaken that of Mallow. Mallow's hand had a clammy touch—clammy, but firm and sure. There was no tremor in the long, thin fingers nor at the lips—the thin, ascetic lips, as of a secret-service man—but in his eyes was a dark fire of purpose. The morning had touched him, but not as it had thrown over Dyck its mantle of peace. Mallow also had enjoyed the smell and feeling of it all, but with this difference—it had filled him with such material joy that he could not bear the thought of leaving it. It gave him strength of will, which would add security to his arm and wrist. Yet, as he looked at Dyck, he saw that his work was cut out for him; for in all his days he had never seen so young a man so well-possessed, so surely in hand.

Dyck had learned swordsmanship with as skilled a master as Ireland had known, and he had shown, in getting knowledge of the weapon, a natural instinct and a capacity worthy of the highest purpose. He had handled the sword since he was six, and his play was better than that of most men; but this was, in fact, his first real duel. In the troubled state of Ireland, with internal discord, challenge, and attack, he had more than once fought, and with success; but that was in the rough-and-tumble of life's chances, as it were, with no deliberate plan to fight according to the rules. Many times, of course, in the process of his training, he had fought as men fight in duels, but with this difference—that now he was permitted to disable or kill his foe.

It was clear that one or the other would not leave this ground—this verdant, beautiful piece of mother earth—exactly as he entered it. He would leave it wounded, incapable, or dead. Indeed, both might leave it wounded, and the chances of success were with the older man, Mallow, whose experience would give him an advantage.

Physically, there was not a vast deal to choose between the two men. Mallow was lank and tall, nervously self-contained, finely concentrated, and vigorous. Dyck was broad of shoulder, well set up, muscular, and with a steadier eye than that of his foe. Also, as the combat developed, it was clear that he had a hand as steady as his eye. What was more, his wrist had superb strength and flexibility; it was as enduring and vital as the forefoot and ankle of a tiger. As a pair they were certainly notable, and would give a good account of themselves.

No one of temperament who observed the scene could ever forget it. The light was perfect—evenly distributed, clear enough to permit accuracy of distance in a stroke. The air was still, gently bracing, and, like most Irish air, adorably sweet.

The spot chosen for the fight was a sort of avenue between great trees, whose broad leaves warded off the direct sun, and whose shade had as yet no black shadows. The turf was as elastic to the foot as a firm mattress. In the trees, birds were singing with liveliness; in the distance, horned cattle browsed, and a pair of horses stood gazing at the combatants, startled, no doubt, by this invasion of their pasturage. From the distance came the faint, mellow booming of church-bells.

The two men fighting had almost the air of gladiators. Their coats were off, and the white linen of their shirts looked gracious; while the upraised left hand of the fighters balancing the sword-thrust and the weight of the body had an almost singular beauty. Of the two, Dyck was the more graceful, the steadier, the quicker in his motions.

Vigilant Dyck was, but not reckless. He had made the first attack, on the ground that the aggressor gains by boldness, if that boldness is joined to skill; and Dyck's skill was of the best. His heart was warm. His momentary vision of Sheila Llyn remained with him—not as a vision, rather as a warmth in his inmost being, something which made him intensely alert, cheerful, defiant, exactly skilful.

He had need of all his skill, for Mallow was set to win the fight. He felt instinctively what was working in Dyck's mind. He had fought a number of duels, and with a certain trick or art he had given the end to the lives of several. He became conscious, however, that Dyck had a particular stroke in mind, which he himself was preventing by masterful methods. It might be one thing or another, but in view of Dyck's training it would perhaps be the Enniscorthy touch.

Again and again Dyck pressed his antagonist backward, seeking to muddle his defence and to clear an opening for his own deadly stroke; but the other man also was a master, and parried successfully.

Presently, with a quick move, Mallow took the offensive, and tried to unsettle Dyck's poise and disorganize his battle-plan. For an instant the tempestuous action, the brilliant, swift play of the sword, the quivering flippancy of the steel, gave Dyck that which almost disconcerted him. Yet he had a grip of himself, and was fortunate to preserve his defence intact; though once his enemy's steel caught his left shoulder, making it bleed. The seconds, however, decided that the thrust was not serious, and made no attempt to interrupt the combat.

Dyck kept singularly cool. As Mallow's face grew flushed, his own grew paler, but it was the paleness of intensity and not of fear. Each man's remarkable skill in defence was a good guarantee against disaster due to carelessness. Seldom have men fought so long and accomplished so little in the way of blood-letting.

At length, however, Dyck's tactics changed. Once again he became aggressive, and he drove his foe to a point where the skill of both men was tried to the uttermost. It was clear the time had come for something definite. Suddenly Dyck threw himself back with an agile step, lunged slightly to one side, and then in a gallant foray got the steel point into the sword-arm of his enemy. That was the Enniscorthy stroke, which had been taught him by William Tandy, the expert swordsman, and had been made famous by Lord Welling, of Enniscorthy. It succeeded, and it gave Dyck the victory, for Mallow's sword dropped from his hand.

A fatigued smile came to Mallow's lips. He clasped the wounded arm with his left hand as the surgeon came forward.

'Well, you got it home,' he said to Dyck; 'and it's deftly done.'

'I did my best,' answered Dyck. 'Give me your hand, if you will.'

With a wry look Mallow, now seated on the old stump of a tree, held out his left hand. It was covered with blood.

'I think we'll have to forego that courtesy, Calhoun,' he said. 'Look at the state of my hand! It's good blood,' he added grimly. 'It's damned good blood, but—but it won't do, you see."

'I'm glad it was no worse,' said Dyck, not touching the bloody hand. 'It's a clean thrust, and you'll be better from it soon. These great men!'—he smiled toward the surgeons—'will soon put you right. I got my chance with the stroke, and took it, because I knew if I didn't you'd have me presently.'

'You'll have a great reputation in Dublin town now, and you'll deserve it,' Mallow added adroitly, the great paleness of his features, however, made ghastly by the hatred in his eyes.

Dyck did not see this look, but he felt a note of malice—a distant note—in Mallow's voice. He saw that what Mallow had said was fresh evidence of the man's arrogant character. It did not offend him, however, for he was victor, and could enter the Breakneck Club or Dublin society with a tranquil eye.

Again Mallow's voice was heard.

'I'd have seen you damned to hell, Calhoun, before I'd have apologized at the Breakneck Club; but after a fight with one of the best swordsmen in Ireland I've learned a lot, and I'll apologize now—completely.'

The surgeon had bound up the slight wound in Dyck's shoulder, had stopped the bleeding, and was now helping him on with his coat. The operation had not been without pain, but this demonstration from his foe was too much for him. It drove the look of pain from his face; it brought a smile to his lips. He came a step nearer.

'I'm as obliged to you as if you'd paid for my board and lodging, Mallow,' he said; 'and that's saying a good deal in these days. I'll never have a bigger fight. You're a greater swordsman than your reputation. I must have provoked you beyond reason,' he went on gallantly. 'I think we'd better forget the whole thing.'

'I'm a Loyalist,' Mallow replied. 'I'm a Loyalist, and if you're one, too, what reason should there be for our not being friends?'

A black cloud flooded Calhoun's face.

'*If—if* I'm a Loyalist, you say! Have you any doubt of it? If you have——'

'You wish your sword had gone into my heart instead of my arm, eh?' interrupted Mallow. 'How easily I am misunderstood! I meant nothing by that "if."' He smiled, and the smile had a touch of wickedness. 'I meant nothing by it—nothing at all. As we are both Loyalists, we must be friends. Good-bye, Calhoun!'

Dyck's face cleared very slowly. Mallow was maddening, but the look of the face was not that of a foe.

'Well, let us be friends,' Dyck answered with a cordial smile. 'Good-bye,' he added. 'I'm damned sorry we had to fight at all. Good-bye!'

Chapter V *The Killing of Erris Boyne*

‘THERE'S many a government has made a mess of things in Ireland,’ said Erris Boyne; ‘but since the day of Cromwell the Accursed this is the worst. Is there a man in Ireland that believes in it, or trusts it? There are men that support it, that are served by it, that fill their pockets out of it; but by Joseph and by Mary, there's none thinks there couldn't be a better! Have a little more marsala, Calhoun?’

With these words, Boyne filled up the long glass out of which Dyck Calhoun had been drinking—drinking too much. Shortly before Dyck had lost all his cash at the card-table. He had turned from it penniless and discomfited to see Boyne, smiling, and gay with wine, in front of him.

Boyne took him by the arm.

‘Come with me,’ said he. ‘There's no luck for you at the tables to-day. Let's go where we can forget the world, where we can lift the banner of freedom and beat the drums of purpose. Come along, lad!’

Boyne had ceased to have his earlier allurement for Dyck Calhoun, but his smile was friendly, his manner was hospitable, and he was on the spot. The time was critical for Dyck—critical and dangerous. He had lost money heavily; he had even exhausted his mother's legacy.

Of late he had seen little of his father, and the little he had seen was not fortunate. They had quarrelled over Dyck's wayward doings. Miles Calhoun had said some hard things to him, and Dyck had replied that he would cut out his own course, trim his own path, walk his own way. He had angered his father terribly, and Miles, in a burst of temper, had disclosed the fact that his own property was in peril. They had been estranged ever since; but the time had come when Dyck must at least secure the credit of his father's name at his bank to find the means of living.

It was with this staring him in the face that Erris Boyne's company seemed to offer at least a recovery of his good spirits. Dissipated as Boyne's look was, he had a natural handsomeness which, with good care of himself personally, well-appointed clothes, a cheerful manner, and witty talk, made him palatable to careless-living Dublin.

This Dublin knew little of Boyne's present domestic life. It did not know that he had injured his second wife as badly as he had wronged his first—with this difference, however, that his first wife was a lady, while his second wife, Noreen, was a beautiful, quick-tempered, lovable eighteen-year-old girl, a graduate of the kitchen and dairy, when he took her to himself. He had married her in a mad moment after his first wife—Mrs. Llyn, as she was now called—had divorced him; and after the first thrill of married life was over, nothing remained with Boyne except regret that he had sold his freedom for what he might, perhaps, have had without marriage.

Then began a process of domestic torture which alienated Noreen from him, and roused in her the worst passions of human nature. She came to know of his infidelities, and they maddened her. They had no children, and in the end he had threatened her with desertion. When she had retorted in strong words, he slapped her face, and left her with an ugly smile.

The house where they lived was outside Dublin, in a secluded spot, yet not far from stores and shops. There was this to be said for Noreen—that she kept her home spotlessly clean, even with two indifferent servants. She had a gift for housewifery, which, at its best, was as good as anything in the world, and far better than could be found in most parts of Ireland.

Of visitors they had few, if any, and the young wife was left alone to brood upon her wrongs. Erris Boyne had slapped her face on the morning of the day when he met Dyck Calhoun in the hour of his bad luck. He did not see the look in her face as he left the house.

Ruthless as he was, he realized the time had come when by bold effort he might get young Calhoun wholly into his power. He began by getting Dyck into the street. Then he took him by an indirect route to what was, reputedly, a tavern of consequence. There choice spirits met on occasion, and dark souls, like Boyne, planned adventures. Outwardly it was a tavern of the old class, superficially sedate, and called the Harp and Crown. None save a very few conspirators knew how great a part it played in the plan to break the government of Ireland and to ruin England's position in the land.

The entrance was by two doors—one the ordinary public entrance, the other at the side of the house, which was on a corner. This could be opened by a skeleton key owned by Erris Boyne.

He and Dyck entered, however, by the general entrance, because Boyne had forgotten his key. They passed through the bar-parlour, nodding to one or two habitués, and presently were bestowed in a room, not large, but well furnished. It was quiet and alluring on this day when the world seemed disconcerting.

So pleasantly did the place affect Dyck's spirits that, as he sat down in the room which had often housed worse men than himself, he gave a sigh of relief.

They played cards, and Dyck won. He won five times what he had lost at the club. This made him companionable.

'It's a poor business—cards,' he said at last. 'It puts one up in the clouds and down in the ditch all at the same time. I tell you this, Boyne—I'm going to stop. No man ought to play cards who hasn't a fortune; and my fortune, I'm sorry to say, is only my face!' He laughed bitterly.

'And your sword—you've forgotten that, Calhoun. You've a lot of luck in your sword.'

'Well, I've made no money out of it so far,' Dyck retorted cynically.

'Yet you've put men with reputations out of the running, men like Mallow.'

'Oh, that was a bit of luck and a few tricks I've learned. I can't start a banking-account on that.'

'But you can put yourself in the way of winning what can't be bought.'

'No—no English army for me, thank you—if that's what you mean.'

'It isn't what I mean. In the English army a man's a slave. He can neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep without being under command. He has to do a lot of dirty work without having voice in the policy. He's a child of discipline and order.'

'And a damned good thing that would be for most of us!' retorted Dyck. 'But I'm not one of the most.'

'I know that. Try a little more of this marsala, Calhoun. It's the best in the place, and it's got a lot of good stuff. I've been coming to the Harp and Crown for many years, and I've never had a bad drink all that time. The old landlord is a genius. He doesn't put on airs. He's a good man, is old Swinton, and there's nothing good in the drink of France that you can't get here.'

'Well, if that's true, how does it happen?' asked Dyck, with a little flash of interest. 'Why should this little twopenny, one-horse place—I mean in size and furnishments—have such luck as to get the best there is in France? It means a lot of trouble, eh?'

'It means some trouble. But let me tell you'—he leaned over the table and laid a hand on Dyck's, which was a little nervous—'let me speak as an old friend to you, if I may. Here are the facts. For many a year, you know as well as I do, ships have been coming from France to Ireland with the very best wines and liquors, and taking back the very best wool—smuggled, of course. Well, our little landlord here is the damnedest rogue of all. The customs never touch him. From the coast the stuff comes up to Dublin without a check, and, as he's a special favourite, he gets the best to be had in *la belle France*.'

'Why is he such a favourite?' asked Dyck.

Erris Boyne laughed, not loudly, but suggestively.

'When a lady kisses a man on the lips, of her own free will, and puts her arm around his neck, is it done, do you think, because it's her duty to do it or die? No, it's because she likes the man; because the man is a good friend to her; because it's money in her pocket. That's the case with old Swinton. France kisses him, as it were, because'—he paused, as though debating what to say—'because France knows he'd rather be under her own revolutionary government than under the monarchy of England.'

His voice had resonance, and, as he said these words, it had insistence.

'Do you know, Calhoun, I think old Swinton is right. We suffer here because monarchy, with its cruel hand of iron, mistrusts us, brutalizes us.'

He did not see enlightenment come into the half-drunken eyes of Dyck. He only realized that Dyck was very still, and strangely, deeply interested.

'I tell you, Calhoun, we need in Ireland something of the spirit that's alive in France to-day. They've cleaned out the kings—Louis's and Marie's heads have dropped into the basket. They're sweeping the dirt out of France ; they're cleaning the dark places ; they're whitewashing Versailles and sawdusting the Tuileries ; they're purging the aristocratic guts of France ; they're starting for the world a reformation which will make it clean. Not America alone, but England, and all Europe, will become republics.'

'England ? ' asked Dyck in a low, penetrating voice.

'Aye, England, through Ireland. Ireland will come first, then Wales, Scotland, and England. Dear lad, the great day is come—the greatest the world has ever known. France, the spirit of it, is alive. It will purge and cleanse the universe ! '

The suspicious, alert look passed from Dyck's eyes, but his face had become flushed. He reached out and poured himself another glass of wine.

'What you say may be true, Boyne. It may be true, but I wouldn't put faith in it—not for one icy minute. I don't want to see here in Ireland the horrors and savagery of France. I don't want to see the guillotine up on St. Stephen's Green.'

Boyne felt that he must march carefully. He was sure of his game ; but there were difficulties, and he must not throw his chances away. Dyck was in a position where, with his inflammable nature, he could be captured.

'Well, I'll tell you, Calhoun. I don't know which is worse—Ireland bloody with shootings and hangings, Ulster up in the north and Cork in the south, from the Giant's Causeway to Tralee; no two sets of feet dancing alike, with the bloody hand of England stretching out over the Irish Parliament like death itself; or France ruling us. How does the English government live here? Only by bribery and purchases. It buys its way. Isn't that true?'

Dyck nodded.

'Yes, it's true in a way,' he replied. 'It's so, because we're what we are. We've never been properly put in our places. The heel on our necks—that's the way to do it.'

Boyne looked at the flushed, angry face. In spite of Dyck's words, he felt that his medicine was working well.

'Listen to me, Calhoun,' he said softly. 'You've got to do something. You're living an idle life. You're in debt. You've ruined your independent fortune at the tables. There are but two courses open to you. One is to join the British forces—to be a lieutenant, a captain, a major, a colonel, or a general, in time; to shoot and cut and hang and quarter, and rule with a heavy rod. That's one way.'

'So you think I'm fit for nothing but the sword, eh?' asked Dyck with irony. 'You think I've got no brains for anything except the army.'

Boyne laughed.

'Have another drink, Calhoun.' He poured out more wine. 'Oh, no, not the army alone; there's the navy—and there's the French navy! It's the best navy in the world, the freest and the greatest, and with Bonaparte going at us, England will have enough to do—too much, I'm thinking. So there's a career in the

French navy open. And listen—before you and I are two months older, the French navy will be in the harbours of Ireland, and the French army will land here.' He reached out and grasped Dyck's arm. 'There's no liberty of freedom under the Union Jack. What do you think of the tricolour? It's a great flag, and under it the world is going to be ruled—England, Spain, Italy, Holland, Prussia, Austria, and Russia—all of them. The time is ripe. You've got your chance. Take it on, dear lad, take it on!'

Dyck did not raise his head. He was leaning forward with both arms on the table, supporting himself firmly; his head was bowed as though with deep interest in what Boyne said. And, indeed, his interest was great—so great that all his manhood, vigour, all his citizenship, were vitally alive. Yet he did not lift his head.

'What's that you say about French ships in the harbours of Ireland?' he said in a tone that showed interest. 'Of course, I know there's been a lot of talk of a French raid on Ireland, but I didn't know it was to be so soon.'

'Oh, it's near enough! It's all been arranged,' replied Boyne. 'There'll be ships—war-ships, commanded by Hoche. They'll have orders to land on the coast, to join the Irish patriots, to take control of the operations, and then to march on——'

He was going to say 'march on Dublin,' but he stopped. He was playing a daring game. If he had not been sure of his man, he would not have been so frank and fearless.

He did not, however, mislead Dyck greatly. Dyck had been drinking a good deal, but this knowledge of a French invasion, and a sense of what Boyne was trying to do, steadied his shaken emotions; held him firmly in the grip of practical common sense. He laughed, hiccuped a little, as though he was very drunk, and said:

'Of course the French would like to come to Ireland; they'd like to seize it and hold it. Why, of course they would! Don't we know all that's been and gone? Aren't Irishmen in France grown rich in industry there after having lost every penny of their property here? Aren't there Irishmen there, always conniving to put England at defiance here by breaking her laws, cheating her officers, seducing her patriots? Of course; but what astounds me is that a man of your standing should believe the French are coming here now to Ireland. No, no, Boyne; I'm not taking your word for any of these things. You're a gossip; you're a damned, pertinacious, preposterous gossip, and I'll say it as often as you like.'

'So it's proof you want, is it? Well, then, here it is.'

Boyne drew from his pocket a small leather-bound case and took from it a letter, which he laid on the table in front of Dyck.

Dyck looked at the document, then said:

'Ah, that's what you are, eh?—a captain in the French artillery! Well, that'd be a surprise in Ireland if it were told.'

'It isn't going to be told unless you tell it, Calhoun, and you're too much of a sportsman for that. Besides, why shouldn't you have one of these if you want it—if you want it!'

'What 'd be the good of my wanting it? I could get a commission here in the army of George III, if I wanted it, but I don't want it; and any man that offers it to me, I'll hand it back with thanks and be damned to you!'

'Listen to me, then, Calhoun,' remarked Boyne, reaching out a hand to lay it on Dyck's arm.

Dyck saw the motion, however, and carefully drew back in his chair. 'I'm not an adventurer,' he said; 'but if I were, what would there be in it for me?'

Boyne misunderstood the look on Dyck's face. He did not grasp the meaning behind the words, and he said to him:

'Oh, a good salary—as good as that of a general, with a commission and the spoils of war! That's the thing in the French army that counts for so much—spoils of war. When they're out on a country like this, they let their officers loose—their officers and men. Did you ever hear tell of a French army being pinched for fodder, or going thirsty for drink, or losing its head for poverty or indigence?'

'No, I never did.'

'Well, then, take the advice of an officer of the French army resident now in Dublin,' continued Boyne, laughing, 'who has the honour of being received as the friend of Mr. Dyck Calhoun of Playmore! Take your hand in the game that's going on! For a man as young as you, with brains and ambition, there's no height he mightn't reach in this country. Think of it—Ireland free from English control; Ireland, with all her dreams, living her own life, fearless, independent, as it was in days of yore. Why, what's to prevent you, Dyck Calhoun, from being president of the Irish Republic? You have brains, looks, skill, and a wonderful tongue. None but a young man could take on the job, for it will require boldness, skill, and the recklessness of perfect courage. Isn't it good enough for you?'

'What's the way to do it?' asked Dick, still holding on to his old self grimly. 'How is it to be done?'

He spoke a little thickly, for, in spite of himself, the wine was clogging his senses. It had been artistically drugged by Boyne.

'Listen to me, Calhoun,' continued Boyne. 'I've known you now some time. We've come in and gone out together. This day was inevitable. You were bound to come to it one way or another. Man, you have a heart of iron; you have the courage of Cæsar or Alexander; you have the chance of doing what no Englishman could ever do—Cromwell, or any other. Well, then, don't you see the fateful moment has come in Irish life and history? Strife everywhere! Alone, what can we do? Alone, if we try to shake off the yoke that binds us we shall be shattered, and our last end be worse than our first. But with French ships, French officers and soldiers, French guns and ammunition, with the trained men of the French army to take control here, what amelioration of our weakness, what confidence and skill on our side! Can you doubt what the end will be? Answer me, man, don't you see it all? Isn't it clear to you? Doesn't such a cause enlist you?'

With a sudden burst of primitive anger, Dyck got to his feet, staggering a little, but grasping the fatal meaning of the whole thing. He looked Erris Boyne in the eyes. His own were bloodshot and dissipated, but there was a look in them of which Boyne might well take heed.

Boyne had not counted on Dyck's refusal; or, if it had occurred to him, the remedy, an ancient one, was ready to his fingers. The wine was drugged. He had watched the decline of Dyck's fortunes with an eye of appreciation; he had seen the clouds of poverty and anxiety closing in. He had known of old Miles Calhoun's financial difficulties. He had observed

Dyck's wayside loitering with revolutionists, and he had taken it with too much seriousness. He knew the condition of Dyck's purse.

He was not prepared for Dyck's indignant outburst.

'I tell you this, Erris Boyne, there's none has ever tried me as you have done! What do you think I am—a thing of the dirty street-corner, something to be swept up and cast into the furnace of treason? Look you, after to-day you and I will never break bread or drink wine together. No—by Heaven, no! I don't know whether you've told me the truth or not, but I think you have. There's this to say—I shall go from this place to Dublin Castle, and shall tell them there—without mentioning your name—what you've told about the French raid. Now, look you, by God, you're a traitor! You oughtn't to live, and if you'll send your seconds to me I'll try and do with you as I did with Leonard Mallow. Only mark me, Erris Boyne, I'll put my sword into your heart. You understand—into your filthy heart!'

At that moment the door of the room opened, and a face looked in for an instant—the face of old Swinton, the landlord of the Harp and Crown. Suddenly Boyne's look changed. He burst into a laugh, and brought his fists down on the table between them with a bang.

'By Joseph and by Mary, but you're a patriot, Calhoun! I was trying to test you. I was searching to find the innermost soul of you. The French fleet, my commission in the French army, and my story about the landlord are all bosh. If I meant what I told you, do you think I'd have been so mad as to tell you so much, damn it? Have you no sense, man? I wanted to find out exactly how you stood—faithful or unfaithful to the crown—and I've found out. Sit down, sit down, Calhoun, dear lad. Take your hand off your sword. Remember, these are terrible days. Everything I said about Ireland is true. What I said about France is false. Sit down, man, and if you're going to join the king's army—as I hope and trust you will—then here's something to help you face the time between.' He threw on the table a packet of notes. 'They're good and healthy, and will buy you what you need. There's not much. There's only a hundred pounds, but I give it to you with all my heart, and you can pay it back when the king's money comes to you, or when you marry a rich woman.'

He said it all with a smile on his face. It was done so cleverly, with so much simulated sincerity, that Dyck, in his state of semi-drunkenness, could not, at the instant, place him in his true light. Besides, there was something handsome and virile in Boyne's face—and untrue; but the untruth Dyck did not at the moment see.

Never in his life had Boyne performed such prodigies of dissimulation. He was suddenly like a schoolboy disclosing the deeds of some adventurous knight. He realized to the full the dangers he had run in disclosing the truth; for it was the truth that he had told.

So serious was the situation, to his mind, that one thing seemed inevitable. Dyck must be kidnapped at once and carried out of Ireland. It would be simple. A little more drugged wine, and he would be asleep and powerless—it had already tugged at him. With the help of his confrères in the tavern, Dyck could be carried out, put on a lugger, and sent away to France.

There was nothing else to do. Boyne had said truly that the French fleet meant to come soon. Dyck must not be able to give the thing away before it happened. The chief thing now was to prime him with the drugged wine till he lost consciousness, and then carry him away to the land of the guillotine. Dyck's tempestuous nature, the poetry and imagination of him, would quickly respond to French culture, to the new orders of the new day in France. Meanwhile, he must be soaked in drugged drink.

Already the wine had played havoc with him ; already stupefaction was coming over his senses. With a good-natured, ribald laugh, Boyne poured out another glass of marsala and pushed it gently over to Dyck's fingers.

'My gin to your marsala,' he said, and he raised his own glass of gin, looking playfully over the top to Dyck.

With a sudden loosening of all the fibres of his nature, Dyck raised the glass of marsala to his lips and drained it off almost at a gulp.

'You're a prodigious liar, Boyne,' he said. 'I didn't think any one could lie so completely.'

'I'll teach you how, Calhoun. It's not hard. I'll teach you how.'

He passed a long cigar over the table to Dyck, who, however, did not light it, but held it in his fingers. Boyne struck a light and held it out across the small table. Dyck leaned forward, but, as he did so, the wine took possession of his senses. His head fell forward in sleep, and the cigar dropped from his fingers.

'Ah, well—ah, well, we must do some business now!' remarked Boyne. He leaned over Dyck for a moment. 'Yes, sound asleep,' he said, and laughed scornfully to himself. 'Well, when it's dark we must get him away. He'll sleep for four or five hours, and by that time he'll be out on the way to France, and the rest is easy.'

He was about to go to the door that led into the business part of the house, when the door leading into the street opened softly, and a woman stepped inside. She had used the key which Boyne had forgotten at his house.

At first he did not hear her. Then, when he did turn round, it was too late. The knife she carried under her skirt flashed out and into Boyne's heart. He collapsed on the floor without a sound, save only a deep sigh.

Stooping over, Noreen drew the knife out with a little gurgling cry—a smothered exclamation. Then she opened the door again—the side-door leading into the street—closed it softly, and was gone.

Three hours afterwards the landlord opened the door. Erris Boyne lay in his silence, stark and still. At the table, with his head sunk in his arms, sat Dyck Calhoun, snoring stertorously, his drawn sword by his side.

With a cry the old man knelt on the floor beside the body of Erris Boyne.

Chapter VI *Dyck in Prison*

WHEN Dyck Calhoun waked, he was in the hands of the king's constables, arrested for the murder of Erris Boyne. It was hard for him to protest his innocence, for he admitted he had quarrelled with Boyne. Also, the landlord was ready to swear concerning a quarrel he had seen when he opened the door for a moment. Dyck, with sudden caution, only said that he would make all clear at the trial.

Dublin and Ireland were shocked and thrilled; England imagined she had come upon one of the most violent episodes of Irish history. One journal protested that it was not possible to believe in Dyck Calhoun's guilt; that his outward habits were known to all, and were above suspicion, although he had collogued—though never secretly, so far as the world knew—with some of the advanced revolutionary spirits. None of the loyal papers seemed to be aware of Erris Boyne's treachery; and while none spoke of him with approval, all condemned his ugly death.

Driven through the streets of Dublin in a jaunting-car between two of the king's police, Dyck was a mark for abuse by tongue, but was here and there cheered by partizans of the ultra-loyal group to which his father adhered. The effect of his potations was still upon him, and his mind was bemused. He remembered the quarrel, Boyne's explanation, and the subsequent drinking, but he could recall nothing further. He was sure the wine had been drugged, but he realized that Swinton, the landlord, would have made away with any signs of foul play, as he was himself an agent of active disloyalty and a friend of Erris Boyne.

Dyck could not believe he had killed Boyne; yet Boyne had been found with a wound in his heart, and his own naked sword lying beside him on the table. The trouble was that he could not absolutely swear he had not committed the crime.

The situation was not eased by his stay in jail. On the contrary, it began with a revelation terribly repugnant to him. He had not long been lodged in the cell when he received a visit from Michael Clones, who stretched out his hands in an agony of humiliation.

'Ah, you didn't do it—you didn't do it, sir!' he cried. 'I'm sure you never killed him. It wasn't your way. He was for doing you harm if he could. An evil man he was, as all the world knows. But there's one thing that 'll be worse than anything else to you. You never knew it, and I never knew it till an hour ago. Did you know who Erris Boyne was? Well, I'll tell you. He was the father of Miss Sheila Llyn. He was divorced by Mrs. Llyn many years ago, for having to do with other women. She took to her maiden name, and he married again.

'Good God! Good God!' Dyck Calhoun made a gesture of horror. 'He Sheila Llyn's father! Good God!'

Suddenly a passion of remorse roused him out of his semi-stupefaction.

'Michael, Michael!' he said, his voice hoarse, broken. 'Don't say such a thing! Are you sure?'

Michael nodded.

'I'm sure. I got it from one that's known Erris Boyne and his first wife and girl—one that was a servant to them both in past days. He's been down to Limerick to see Mrs. Llyn and the beautiful daughter. I met him an hour ago, and he told me. He told me more. He told me Mrs. Llyn spoke to him of your friendship with Erris Boyne, and how she meant to tell you who and what he was. She said her daughter didn't even know her father's name. She had been kept in ignorance.'

Dyck seated himself on the rough bed of the cell, and stared at Michael, his hands between his knees, his eyes perturbed.

'Michael,' he said at last, 'if it's true—what you've told me—I don't see my way. Every step in front of me is black with vileness. To tell the whole truth is to bring fresh shame upon Mrs. Llyn and her daughter, and not to tell the whole truth is to take away the only chance I have of getting out of this trouble. I see that!'

'I don't know what you mean, sir, but I'll tell you this—none that knows you would believe you'd murder Erris Boyne or anny other man.'

Dyck wiped the sweat from his forehead.

'I suppose you speak the truth, Michael, but it isn't people who've known me that'll try me; and I can't tell all.'

'Why not, if it'll help you?'

'I can't—of course I can't. It would be disgrace eternal.'

'Why? Tell me why, sir!'

Dyck looked closely, firmly, at the old servant and friend. Should he tell the truth—that Boyne had tried to induce him to sell himself to the French, to invoke his aid against the English government, to share in treason? If he could have told it to anybody, he would have done so to Michael; but if it was true that in his drunken blindness he had killed Boyne, he would not seek to escape by proving Boyne a traitor.

He believed Boyne was a servant of the French; but unless the facts came out in the trial, they should not have sure origin in himself. He would not add to his crime in killing the father of the only girl who had ever touched his heart, the shame of proving that father to be one who should have been shot as a traitor.

He had courage and daring, but not sufficient to carry him through that dark chapter. He would not try to save himself by turning public opinion against Erris Boyne. The man had been killed by some one, perhaps—and the thing ached in his heart—by himself; but that was no reason why the man's death should not be sufficient punishment for all the wrong he had done.

Dyck had a foolish strain in him, after all. Romance was his deadly foe; it made him do a stupid, if chivalrous, thing. Meanwhile he would warn the government at once about the projected French naval raid.

'Michael,' said Dyck, rising again, 'see my father, but you're not to say I didn't kill Boyne, for, to tell the truth, I don't know. My head'—he put his hand to it with a gesture of despair—'my head's a mass of contradictions. Do you know, it seems a thousand years since I entered that tavern! I can't get myself level with all that's happened. That Erris Boyne should be the father of that sweet girl at Limerick and the husband of Mrs. Llyn shakes me. Don't you see what it means? If I killed him, it spoils everything—everything. If I didn't kill him, I can only help myself by blackening still more the life of one who gave being to——'

'Aye, to a young queen!' interrupted Michael. 'God knows, there's none like her in Ireland, or in any other country at all!'

Suddenly Dyck regained his composure; and it was the composure of one who had opened the door of hell and had realized that in time—perhaps not far off—he also would dwell in the infernal place.

'Michael, I have no money, but I'm my father's heir. My father will not see me starve in prison, nor want for defence, though my attitude shall be "no defence." So bring me decent food and some clothes, and send to me here Will McCormick, the lawyer. He's as able a man as there is in Dublin. Listen, Michael, you're not to speak of Mrs. Llyn and Miss Llyn as related to Erris Boyne. What will come of what you and I know and don't know, Heaven only has knowledge; but I'll see it through. I've spoiled as good chances as ever a young man had that wants to make his way; but drink and cards, Michael, and the flare of this damned life at the centre—it got hold of me. It muddled, drowned the best that was in me. It's the witch's kitchen, is Dublin. Ireland's the only place in the world where they make saints of criminals and pray to them; where they lose track of time and think they're in eternity; where emotion is saturnine logic and death is the touchstone of life. Michael, I don't see any way to safety. Those fellows down at the tavern were friends of Erris Boyne. They're against me. They'll hang me if they can!'

'I don't believe they can do it, master. Dublin and Ireland think more of you than they did of Erris Boyne. There's nothing behind you except the wildness of youth—nothing at all. If anny one had said to me at Playmore that you'd do the things you've done with drink and cards since you come to Dublin, I'd have swore they were liars. Yet when all's said and done, I'd give my last drop of blood as guarantee you didn't kill Erris Boyne!'

Dyck smiled.

'You've a lot of faith in me, Michael—but I'll tell you this—I never was so thirsty in my life. My mouth's like a red-hot iron. Send me some water. Give the warder sixpence, if you've got it, and send me some water. Then go to Will McCormick, and after that to my father.'

Michael shook his head dolefully.

'Mr. McCormick's aisy—oh, aisy enough,' he said. 'He'll lep up at the idea of defendin' you, but I'm not takin' pleasure in goin' to Miles Calhoun, for he's a hard man these days. Aw, Mr. Dyck, he's had a lot of trouble. Things has been goin' wrong with Playmore. 'Pon honour, I don't know whether anny of it'll last as long as Miles Calhoun lasts. There'll be little left for you, Mr. Dyck. That's what troubles me. I tell you it'd break my heart if that place should be lost to your father and you. I was born on it. I'd give the best years of the life that's left me to make sure the old house could stay in the hands of the Calhouns. I say to you that while I live all I am is yours, fair and foul, good and bad.' He touched his breast with his right hand. 'In here is the soul of Ireland that leps up on the heights for the things that matter. There's a song—but never mind about a song; this is no place for songs. It's a prison-house, and you're a prisoner charged——'

'Not charged yet, not charged,' interrupted Dyck; 'but suspected of and arrested for a crime. I'll fight—before God, I'll fight to the last! Good-bye, Michael; bring me food and clothes, and send me cold water at once.'

When the door closed softly behind Michael Clones, Dyck sat down on the bed where many a criminal patriot had lain. He looked round the small room, bare, unfurnished, severe—terribly severe ; he looked at the blank walls and the barred window, high up ; he looked at the floor—it was discoloured and damp. He reached out and touched it with his hand. He looked at the solitary chair, the basin and pail, and he shuddered.

'How awful—how awful!' he murmured. 'But if it was her father, and if I killed him'—his head sank low—'if I killed her father!'

'Water, sir.'

He looked up. It was the guard with a tin of water and a dipper.

Chapter VII *Mother and Daughter*

'I DON'T believe he's guilty, mother.'

The girl's fine eyes shone with feeling—with protest, indignation, anguish. As she spoke, she thrust her head forward with the vigour of a passionate counsel. Sheila Llyn was a champion who would fight to the last gasp for any cause she loved.

A few moments before, she had found her mother, with horror-stricken face, gazing at a newspaper paragraph sent to her from Dublin.

Sheila at once thought this to be the cause of her mother's agitation, and she reached out a hand for it Her mother hesitated, then handed the clipping to her. Fortunately it contained no statement save the bare facts connected with the killing of Erris Boyne, and no reference to the earlier life of the dead man. It said no more than that Dyck Calhoun must take his trial at the sessions.

It also stated that Dyck, though he pleaded 'not guilty,' declared frankly, through Will McCormick, the lawyer, that he had no memory of aught that happened after he had drunk wine given him by Erris Boyne. He said that he and Boyne had quarrelled, but had become reconciled again, and that the drink was a pledge of their understanding. From the time he had taken the drink until he waked in the hands of the king's constables, he had no memory; but he was sure he had not killed Boyne. The fact that there was no blood on his sword was evidence. Nevertheless, he had been committed for trial.

Mrs. Llyn was sorely troubled. She knew of her daughter's interest in Dyck Calhoun, and of Dyck's regard for Sheila. She had even looked forward to marriage, and she wished for Sheila no better fate, because nearly all she knew of Dyck was to his credit. She was unaware that his life in Dublin had been dissipated.

If Dyck was guilty—though she could not believe he was—there would be an end of romance between him and Sheila, and their friendship must be severed for ever. Her daughter did not know that Erris Boyne was her father, and she must not know—in any case not yet; but if Dyck was condemned, it was almost certain he would be hanged.

She wondered about Boyne's widow, whose name did not appear in the paragraph she had seen. She knew that Noreen was beautiful, but that he had married far beneath him socially. She had imagined Erris Boyne living in suburban quiet, not drawing his wife into his social scheme.

That is what had happened. The woman had lived apart from the daily experiences of her husband's life in Dublin; and it had deepened her bitterness against him. When she had learned that Erris Boyne was no more faithful to her than he had been to his previous wife, she had gone mad; and Dyck Calhoun was now paying the price of her madness.

Mrs. Llyn did not know this, however. She was a woman of distinguished bearing, though small, with a wan, sad look in her eyes always, but with a cheerful smile. She was not poor, but well-to-do, and it was not necessary to deny herself or her daughter ordinary comforts, and even many of the luxuries of life.

Her hair was darker than her daughter's, black and wavy, with here and there streaks of grey. These, however, only added dignity to a head beautifully balanced, finely moulded, and, in the language of the day, most genteelly hung. She was slender, buoyant in movement yet composed, and her voice was like her daughter's, clear, gentle, thrilling.

Her mind and heart were given up to Sheila and Sheila's future. That was why a knowledge of the tragedy that had come to Dyck Calhoun troubled her as she had not been troubled since the day she first learned of Erris Boyne's infidelity to herself.

'Let us go to Dublin, mother,' said Sheila with a determined air, after reading the clipping.

'Why, my dear?'

The woman's eyes, with their long lashes, looked searchingly into her daughter's face. She felt, as the years went on, that Shelia had gifts granted to few. She realized that the girl had resources which would make her a governing influence in whatever sphere of life she should be set. Quietly, Sheila was taking control of their movements, and indeed of her own daily life. The girl had a dominating skill which came in part from herself, and also to a degree from her father; but her disposition was not her father's—it was her mother's.

Mrs. Llyn had never known Sheila to lie or twist the truth in all her days. No one was more obedient to wise argument; and her mother had a feeling that now, perhaps, the time had come when they two must have a struggle for mastery. There was every reason why they should not go to Dublin. There Sheila might discover that Erris Boyne was her father, and might learn the story of her mother's life.

Sheila had been told by her mother that her father had passed away abroad when she was a little child. She had never seen her father's picture, and her mother had given her the impression that their last days together had not been happy. She had always felt that it was better not to inquire too closely into her father's life.

The years had gone on and then had come the happy visit to Loyland Towers, where she had met Dyck Calhoun. Her life at that moment had been free from troublesome emotions; but since the time she had met Dyck at the top of the hill, a new set of feelings worked in her.

She was as bonny a lass as ever the old world produced—lithe, with a body like that of a boy, strong and pleasant of face, with a haunting beauty in the eyes, a majesty of the neck and chin, and a carriage which had made Michael Clones call her a queen.

She saw Dyck only as a happy, wild son of the hilltop. To her he was a man of mettle and worth, irresponsible because he had been given no responsibility. He was a country gentleman of Ireland, with all the interest and peril of the life of a country gentleman.

'Yes, we ought to go to Dublin, mother. We could help him, perhaps,' Sheila insisted.

The mother shook her head mournfully.

'My child, we could do him no good at all—none whatever. Besides, I can't afford to visit Dublin now. It's an expensive journey, and the repairs we've been doing here have run me close.'

A look of indignation, almost of scorn, came into the girl's face.

'Well, if I were being tried for my life, as Dyck Calhoun is going to be, and if I knew that friends of mine were standing off because of a few pounds, shillings, and pence, I think I'd be a real murderer!'

The mother took her daughter's hand. She found it cold.

'My dear,' she said, clasping it gently, 'you never saw him but three times, and I've never seen him but twice except in the distance; but I would do anything in my power to help him, if I could, for I like him. The thing for us to do——'

'Yes, I know—sit here, twist our thumbs, and do nothing!'

'What more could we do if we went to Dublin, except listen to gossip, read the papers and be jarred every moment? My dear, our best place is here. If the spending of money could be of any use to him, I'd spend it—indeed I would; but since it can't be of any use, we must stay in our own home. Of one thing I'm sure—if Dyck Calhoun killed Erris Boyne, Boyne deserved it. Of one thing I'm certain beyond all else—it was no murder. Mr. Calhoun wasn't a man to murder any one. I don't believe'—her voice became passionate—'he committed the murder, and I don't believe he will be hanged.'

The girl looked at her mother with unveiled surprise. 'Oh, dearest, dearest!' she said. 'I believe you do care for him. Is it because he has no mother, and you have no son?'

'It may be so, beloved.'

With impulse Sheila swept her arms around her mother's neck and drew the fine head to her breast.

At that moment they heard the clatter of hoofs, and presently they saw a horse and rider pass the window.

'It's a government messenger, mother,' Sheila said.

As Sheila said, it was a government messenger, bearing a packet to Mrs. Llyn—a letter from her brother in America, whom she had not seen for many years.

The brother, Bryan Llyn, had gone out there as a young man before the Revolutionary War. He had prospered, taking sides against England in the war, and become a man of importance in the schemes of the new republican government. Only occasionally had letters come from him to his sister, and for nearly eleven years she had not had a single word from him.

When she opened the packet now, she felt it would help to solve—she knew not how—the trouble between herself and her daughter. The letter had been sent to a firm in Dublin with which Bryan Llyn had done business, with instructions that it should be forwarded to his sister. It had reached the hands of a government official, who was a brother of a member of the firm, and he had used the government messenger, who was going upon other business to Limerick, to forward it with a friendly covering note, which ended with the words:

'The recent tragedy you have no doubt seen in the papers must have shocked you; but to those who know the inside the end was inevitable, though there are many who do not think Calhoun is guilty. I am one of them. Nevertheless, it will go hard with him, as the evidence is strong against him. He comes from your part of the country, and you will be concerned, of course.'

Sheila watched her mother reading, and saw that great emotion possessed her, though the girl could not know the cause. Presently, however, Mrs. Llyn, who had read the letter from her brother, made a joyful exclamation.

'What is it, mother dear?' Sheila asked eagerly 'Tell me!'

The mother made a passionate gesture of astonishment and joy; then she leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes, with the letter—which was closely written, in old-fashioned punctiliousness—in her hands.

'Oh, my dear, my dear!' she said. 'How strange it all is! Your Uncle Bryan is immensely rich. He has no children and no family; his health is failing.'

She seemed able to get no further.

'Well, what is it, mother?' asked Sheila again.

For an instant Mrs. Llyn hesitated; then she put the letter into Sheila's hands.

'Read it, my child,' she said. 'It's for you as much as for me—indeed, more for you than for me.'

Sheila took the letter It ran as follows:

'DEAREST SISTER:

'It is eleven years since I wrote to you, and yet, though it may seem strange, there have not been eleven days in all that time in which I have not wished you and Shelia were here. Sheila—why, she is a young woman! She's about the age you were when I left Ireland, and you were one of the most beautiful and charming creatures God ever gave life to. The last picture I have of you was a drawing made soon after your marriage—sad, bad, unhappy incident. I have kept it by me always. It warms my heart in winter; it cools my eyes in summer.

'My estate is neither North nor South, but farther South than North. In a sense it is always summer, but winter on my place would be like summer in Norway—just bitingly fresh, happily alert. I'm writing in the summer now. I look out of the window and see hundreds of acres of cotton-fields, with hundreds upon hundreds of negroes at work. I hear the songs they sing, faint echoes of them, even as I write. Yes, my black folk do sing, because they are well treated.

'Not that we haven't our troubles here. You can't administer thousands of acres, control hundreds of slaves, and run an estate like a piece of clockwork without creaks in the machinery. I've built it all up out of next to nothing. I landed in this country with my little fortune of two thousand pounds. This estate is worth at least a quarter of a million now. I've an estate in Jamaica, too. I took it for a debt. What it'll be worth in another twenty years I don't know. I shan't be here to see. I'm not the man I was physically, and that's one of the reasons why I'm writing to you to-day. I've often wished to write and say what I'm going to say now; but I've held back, because I wanted you to finish your girl's education before I said it.

'What I say is this: I want you and Sheila to come here to me, to make my home your home, to take control of my household, and to let me see faces I love about me as the shadows enfold me.

'Like your married life, mine was unsuccessful, but not for the same reason. The woman I married did not understand—probably could not understand. She gave me no children. We are born this way, or that. To understand is pain and joy in one; to misconceive is to scatter broken glass for bare feet. Yet when I laid her away, a few years ago, I had terrible pangs of regret, which must come to the heart that has striven in vain. I did my best; I tried to make her understand, but she never did. I used at first to feel angry; then I became patient. But I waked up again, and went smiling along, active, vigorous, getting pleasure out of the infinitely small things, and happy in perfecting my organization.

'This place, which I have called Moira, is to be yours—or, rather, Sheila's. So, in any case, you will want to come and see the home I have made—this old colonial mansion, with its Corinthian pillars and verandah, high steps, hard-wood floors polished like a pan, every room hung in dimity and chintz, and the smell of fruit and flowers everywhere. You will want to see it all, and you'll want to live here.

'There's little rain here, so it's not like Ireland, and the green is not so green; but the flowers are marvellously bright, and the birds sing almost as well as they sing in Ireland, though there's no lark. Strange it is, but true, the only things that draw me back to Ireland in my soul are you, and Sheila, whom I've never seen, and the lark singing as he rises, until he becomes a grey-blue speck, and then vanishing from the scene.

'Well, you and the lark have sung in my heart these many days, and now you must come to me, because I need you. I have placed to your credit in the Bank of Ireland a thousand pounds. That will be the means of bringing you here—you and Sheila—to my door, to Moira. Let nothing save death prevent your coming. As far as Sheila's eye can see—north, south, east, and west—the land will be hers when I'm gone. Dearest sister, sell all things that are yours, and come to me. You'll not forget Ireland here. Whoever has breathed her air can never forget the hills and dells, the valleys and bogs the mountains, with their mists of rain, the wild girls, with their bare ankles, their red petticoats, and their beautiful, reckless air. None who has ever breathed the air of Ireland can breathe in another land without memory of the ancient harp of Ireland. But it is as a memory—deep, wonderful, and abiding, yet a memory. I sometimes think I have forgotten, and then I hear coming through this Virginia the notes of some old Irish melody, the song of some wayfarer of Mayo or Connemara, and I know then that Ireland is persuasive and perpetual; but only as a memory, because it speaks in every pulse and beats in every nerve.

'Oh, believe me, I speak of what I know! I have been away from Ireland for a long time, and I'm never going back, but I'll bring Ireland to me. Come here, colleen, come to Virginia. Write to me, on the day you get this letter, that you're coming soon. Let it be soon, because I feel the cords binding me to my beloved fields growing thinner. They'll soon crack, but, please God, they won't crack before you come here.

'Now with my love to you and Sheila I stretch out my hand to you. Take it All that it has worked for is yours; all that it wants is you.

'Your loving brother,

'BRYAN'

As Sheila read, the tears started from her eyes; and at last she could read no longer, so her mother took the letter from her and read the rest of it aloud. When she had finished, there was silence—a long warm silence; then, at last, Mrs. Llyn rose to her feet.

'Sheila, when shall we go?'

With frightened eyes Sheila sprang up.

'I said we must go to Dublin!' she murmured.

'Yes, we will go to Dublin, Sheila, but it will be on our way to Uncle Bryan's home.'

Sheila caught her mother's hands.

'Mother,' she said, after a moment of hesitation, 'I must obey you.'

'It is the one way, my child—the one thing to do. Some one in prison calls—perhaps; some one far away who loves you, and needs us, calls—that we know. Tell me, am I not right? I ask you, where shall we go?'

'To Virginia, mother.'

The girl's head dropped, and her eyes filled with tears.

Chapter VIII *Dyck's Father Visits Him*

IN vain Dyck's lawyer, Will McCormick, urged him to deny absolutely the killing of Erris Boyne. Dyck would not do so. He had, however, immediately on being jailed, written to the Government, telling of the projected invasion of Ireland by the French fleet, and saying that it had come to him from a sure source. The Government had at once taken action.

Regarding the death of Boyne, the only thing in his favour was that his own sword-point was free from stain. His lawyer made the utmost of this, but to no avail. The impression in the court was that both men had been drinking; that they had quarrelled, and that without a duel being fought Dyck had killed his enemy.

That there had been no duel was clear from the fact that Erris Boyne's sword was undrawn. The charge, however, on the instigation of the Attorney-General, who was grateful for the information about France, had been changed from murder to manslaughter; though it seemed clear that Boyne had been ruthlessly killed by a man whom he had befriended.

On one of the days of the trial, Dyck's father, bowed, morose, and obstinate, came to see him. That Dyck and Boyne had quarrelled had been stated in evidence by the landlord, Swinton, and Dyck had admitted it. Miles Calhoun was bent upon finding what the story of the quarrel was; for his own lawyer had told him that Dyck's refusal to give the cause of the dispute would affect the jury adversely, and might bring him a sentence of imprisonment for life. After the formalities of their meeting, Miles Calhoun said:

'My son, things are black, but they're not so black they can't be brightened. I think if you killed Erris Boyne, he deserved it. He was a bad man, as the world knows. That isn't the point. Now, there's only one kind of quarrel that warrants non-disclosure.'

'You mean about a woman?' remarked Dyck coldly.

The old man took a pinch of snuff nervously.

'That's what I mean. Boyne was older than you, and perhaps you stepped in and cut him out.'

A wry smile wrinkled the corners of Dyck's mouth.

'You mean his wife?' he asked with irony.

'Wife—no!' retorted the old man. 'Damn it, no! He wasn't the man to remain true to his wife.'

'So I understand,' remarked Dyck; 'but I don't know his wife. I never saw her, except at the trial, and I was so sorry for her I ceased to be sorry for myself. She had a beautiful, strange, isolated face.'

'But that wouldn't influence Boyne,' was the reply. 'His first wife had a beautiful and interesting face, but it didn't hold him. He went marauding elsewhere, and she divorced him by act of parliament. I don't think you knew it, but his first wife was one of your acquaintances—Mrs. Llyn, whose daughter you saw just before we left Playmore. He wasn't particular where he made love—a barmaid or a housekeeper, it was all the same to him.'

'I hope the daughter doesn't know that Erris Boyne was her father,' said Dyck.

'There's plenty can tell her, and she'll hear it sooner or later.'

Miles Calhoun looked at his son with dejection. His eyes wandered over the grimly furnished cell. His nose smelled the damp of it, and suddenly the whole soul of him burst forth.

'You don't give yourself a chance of escape, Dyck! You know what Irish juries are. Why don't you tell the truth about the quarrel? What's the good of keeping your mouth shut, when there's many that would profit by your telling it?'

'Who would profit?" asked Dyck.

'Who would profit!' snarled the old man. 'Well, you would profit first, for it might break the dark chain of circumstantial evidence. Also, your father would profit. I'd be saved shame, perhaps; I'd get relief from this disgrace. Oh, man, think of others beside yourself!'

'Think of others!' said Dyck, and a queer smile lighted his haggard face. 'I'd save myself if I honourably could.'

'The law must prove you guilty,' the old man went on. 'It's not for you to prove yourself innocent. They haven't proved you guilty yet.'

The old man fumbled with a waistcoat button. His eyes blinked hard.

'You don't see,' he continued, 'the one thing that's plain to my eyes, and it's this—that your only chance of escape is to tell the truth about the quarrel. If the truth were told, whatever it is, I believe it would be to your credit—I'll say that for you. If it was to your credit, even if they believe you guilty of killing Erris Boyne, they'd touch you lightly. Ah, in the name of the mother you loved, I ask you to tell the truth about that quarrel! Give it into the hands of the jury, and let them decide. Haven't you got a heart in you? In the name of God ——'

'Don't speak to me like that,' interrupted Dyck, with emotion. 'I've thought of all those things. I hold my peace because—because I hold my peace. To speak would be to hurt some one I love—aye, to hurt some one I love with all my soul.'

'And you won't speak to save me—your father—because you don't love me with all your soul! Is that it?' asked Miles Calhoun.

'It's different—it's different.'

'Ah, it's a woman!'

'Never mind what it is. I will not tell There are things more shameful than death.'

'Yes,' snarled the old man. 'Rather than save yourself, you bring dishonour upon him who gave you birth.'

Dyck's face was submerged in colour.

'Father,' said he, 'on my honour I wouldn't hurt you if I could help it, but I'll not tell the world of the quarrel between that man and myself. My silence may hurt you, but it would hurt some one else far more if I told.'

'By God, I think you're some mad dreamer slipped out of the ancient fold! Do you know where you are? You're in jail. If you're found guilty, you'll be sent to prison at least for the years that'll spoil the making of your life; and you do it because you think you'll spare somebody. Well, I ask you to spare me. I don't want the man that's going to inherit my name, when my time comes, to bring foulness on it. We've been a rough race, we Calhouns; we've done mad, bad things, perhaps, but none has shamed us before the world—none but you.'

'I have never shamed you, Miles Calhoun,' replied his son sharply. 'As the ancients said, *alis volat propriis*—I will fly with my own wings. Come weal, come woe, come dark, come light, I have fixed my mind, and nothing shall change it. You loved my mother better than the rest of the world. You would have thought it no shame to have said so to your own father. Well, I say it to you—I'll stand by what my conscience and my soul have dictated to me. You call me a dreamer. Let it be so. I'm Irish; I'm a Celt. I've drunk deep of all that Ireland means. All that's behind me is my own, back to the shadowy kings of Ireland, who lost life and gave it because they believed in what they did. So will I. If I'm to walk the hills no more on the estate where you are master, let it be so. I have no fear; I want no favour. If it is to be prison, then it shall be prison. If it is to be shame, then let it be shame. These are days when men must suffer if they make mistakes. Well, I will suffer, fearlessly if helplessly, but I will not break the oath which I have taken. And so I will not do it—never—never—never!'

He picked up the cloak which the old man had dropped on the floor, and handed it to him.

'There is no good in staying longer. I must go into court again to-morrow. I have to think how my lawyer shall answer the evidence given.'

'But of one thing have you thought?' asked his father. 'You will not tell the cause of the quarrel, for the reason that you might hurt somebody. If you don't tell the cause, and you are condemned, won't that hurt somebody even more?'

For a moment Dyck stood silent, absorbed. His face looked pinched, his whole appearance shrivelled. Then, with deliberation, he said:

'This is not a matter of expediency, but of principle. My heart tells me what to do, and my heart has always been right.'

There was silence for a long time. At last the old man drew the cloak about his shoulders and turned towards the door.

'Wait a minute, father,' said Dyck. 'Don't go like that. You'd better not come and see me again. If I'm condemned, go back to Playmore; if I'm set free, go back to Playmore. That's the place for you to be. You've got your own troubles there.'

'And you—if you're acquitted?'

'If I'm acquitted, I'll take to the high seas—till I'm cured.'

A moment later, without further words, Dyck was alone. He heard the door clang.

He sat for some time on the edge of his bed, buried in dejection. Presently, however, the door opened.

'A letter for you, sir,' said the jailer.

Chapter IX *A Letter from Sheila*

THE light of the cell was dim, but Dyck managed to read the letter without great difficulty, as the writing was almost as precise as print. The sight of it caught his heart like a warm hand and pressed it. This was the substance of the letter:

'MY DEAR FRIEND:

'I have wanted to visit you in prison, but my mother has forbidden it, and so, even if I could be let to enter, I must not disobey her. I have not read the papers giving an account of your trial. I only know you are charged with killing a bad man, notorious in Dublin life, and that many think he got his just deserts in being killed.

'I saw Christopher Dogan only a week ago, before we came to Dublin. His eyes, as he talked of you, shone like the secret hill-fires where the peasants make illegal drink.

'"Look you," he said to me, "I care not what a jury decides. I know my man; and I also know that if the fellow Boyne died by his hand, it was in fair fight. I have read Dyck Calhoun's story in the stars; and I know what his end will be. It will be fair, not foul; good, not bad; great, not low. Tell him that from me, miss," was what he said.

'I also will not believe that your fate is an evil one, that the law will grind you between the millstones of guilt and dishonour ; but if the law should call you guilty, I still will not believe. Far away I will think of you, and believe in you, dear, masterful, madman friend. Yes, you are a madman, for Michael Clones told me—faith, he loves you well !—that you've been living a gay life in Dublin since you came here, and that the man you are accused of killing was in great part the cause of it.

'I think I never saw my mother so troubled in spirit as she is at this time. Of course, she could not feel as I do about you. It isn't that which makes her sad and haggard ; it is that we are leaving Ireland behind.

'Yes, she and I are saying good-bye to Ireland. That's why I think she might have let me see you before we went ; but since it must not be, well, then, it must not. But we shall meet again. In my soul I know that on the hills somewhere far off, as on the first day we met, we shall meet each other once more. Where are we going ? Oh, very far ! We are going to my Uncle Bryan—Bryan Llyn, in Virginia. A letter has come from him urging us to make our home with him. You see, my friend——'

Then followed the story which Bryan Llyn had told her mother and herself, and she wrote of her mother's decision to go out to the new, great home which her uncle had made among the cotton-fields of the South. When she had finished that part of the tale, she went on as follows :

'We shall know your fate only through the letters that will follow us, but I will not believe in your bad luck. Listen to me—why don't you come to America also ? Oh, think it over ! Don't believe the worst will come. When they release you from prison, innocent and acquitted, cross the ocean and set up your tent under the Stars and Stripes. Think of it! Nearly all those men in America who fought under Washington and won were born in these islands. They took with them to that far land the memory and love of these old homes. You and I would have fought for England and with the British troops, because we detest revolution. Here, in Ireland, we have seen its evils; and yet if we had fought for the Union Jack beyond the mountains of Maine and in the lonely woods, we should, I believe, in the end have said that the freedom fought for by the American States was well won.

'So keep this matter in your mind, as my mother and I will soon be gone. She would not let me come to you,—I think I have never seen her so disturbed as when I asked her,—and she forbade me to write to you; but I disobey her. Well, this is a sad business. I know my mother has suffered. I know her married life was unhappy, and that her husband—my father—died many a year ago, leaving a dark trail of regret behind him; but, you see, I never knew my father. That was all long ago, and it is a hundred times best forgotten.

'Our ship sails for Virginia in three days, and I must go. I will keep looking back to the prison where lies, charged with an evil crime, of which he is not guilty, a young man for whom I shall always carry the spirit of good friendship.

'Do not believe all will not go well. The thing to do is to keep the courage of our hearts and the faith of our souls, and I hope I always shall. I believe in you, and, believing, I say good-bye. I say farewell in the great hope that somehow, somewhere, we shall help each other on the way of life. God be with you!

'I am your friend,
'SHEILA LLYN.

'P.S.—I beg you to remember that America is a good place for a young man to live in and succeed.'

Dyck read the letter with a wonderful slowness. He realized that by happy accident—it could be nothing else—Mrs. Llyn had been able to keep from her daughter the fact that the man who had been killed in the tavern by the river was her father. It was clear that the girl was kept much to herself, read no newspapers, and saw few people, and that those whom she saw had been careful to hold their peace about her close relationship to Erris Boyne. None but the evil-minded would recall the fact to her.

Sheila's ignorance must not be broken by himself. He had done the right thing—he had held his peace for the girl's sake, and he would hold it to the end. Slowly he folded up the letter, pressed it to his lips, and put it in the pocket over his heart

No Defence

Book II

Chapter X *Dyck Calhoun enters the World again*

'IS it near the time?' asked Michael Clones of his friend, as they stood in front of the prison.

His companion, who was seated on a stone, wrapped in dark-green coverings faded and worn, and looking pinched with cold in the dour November day, said, without lifting his head:

'Seven minutes, an' he'll be out, God bless him!'

'And save him and protect him!' said Michael. 'He deserved punishment no more than I did, and it's broke him. I've seen the grey gather at his temples, though he's only been in prison four years. He was condemned to eight, but they've let him free, I don't know why. Perhaps it was because of what he told the Government about the French navy. I've seen the joy of life sob itself down to the sour earth. When I took him the news of his father's death, and told him the creditors were swallowing what was left of Playmore, what do you think he did?'

Old Christopher Dogan smiled; his eyes twinkled with a mirth which had more pain than gaiety.

'God love you, I know what he did. He flung out his hands, and said, "Let it go! It's nothing to me." Michael, have I said true?'

Michael nodded.

'Almost his very words you've used, and he flung out his hands, as you said.'

'Aye, he'll be changed; but they've kept the clothes he had when he went to prison, and he'll come out in them, I'm thinking——'

'Ah, no!' interrupted Michael. 'That can't be, for his clothes was stole. Only a week ago he sent to me for a suit of my own. I wouldn't have him wear my clothes—he a gentleman! It wasn't fitting. So I sent him a suit I bought from a shop, but he wouldn't have it. He would leave prison a poor man, as a peasant in peasant's clothes. So he wrote to me. Here is the letter.' He drew from his pocket a sheet of paper, and spread it out. 'See—read it. Ah, well, never mind,' he added, as old Christopher shook his head. 'Never mind, I'll read it to you!' Thereupon he read the note, and added: 'We'll see him of the Calhouns risin' high beyant poverty and misfortune some day.'

Old Christopher nodded.

'I'm glad Miles Calhoun was buried on the hilltop above Playmore. He had his day; he lived his life. Things went wrong with him, and he paid the price we all must pay for work ill-done.'

'There you're right, Christopher Dogan, and I remember the day the downfall began. It was when him that's now Lord Mallow, Governor of Jamaica, came to summon Miles Calhoun to Dublin. Things were never the same after that; but I well remember one talk I had with Miles Calhoun just before his death. "Michael," he said to me, "my family have had many ups and downs, and some that bear my name have been in prison before this, but never for killing a man out of fair fight." "One of your name may be in prison, sir," said I, "but not for killing a man out of fair fight. If you believe he did, there's no death bad enough for you!" He was silent for a while; then at last he whispered Mr. Dyck's name, and said to me : " Tell him that as a Calhoun I love him, and as his father I love him ten times more. For look you, Michael, though we never ran together, but quarrelled and took our own paths, yet we are both Calhouns, and my heart is warm to him. If my son were a thousand times a criminal, nevertheless I would ache to take him by the hand." '

'Hush! Look at the prison gate,' said his companion, and stood up.

As the gates of the prison opened, the sun broke through the clouds and gave a brilliant phase to the scene. Out of the gates there came slowly, yet firmly, dressed in peasant clothes, the stalwart but faded figure of Dyck Calhoun.

Terribly changed he was. He had entered prison with the flush upon his cheek, the lilt of young manhood in his eyes, with hair black and hands slender and handsome. There was no look of youth in his face now. It was the face of a middle-aged man from which the dew of youth had vanished, into which life's storms had come and gone. Though the body was held erect, yet the head was thrust slightly forward, and the heavy eyebrows were like a penthouse. The eyes were slightly feverish, and round the mouth there crept a smile, half-cynical but a little happy. All freshness was gone from his hands. One hung at his side, listless, corded ; the other doffed his hat in reply to the salute of his two humble friends.

As the gates closed behind him he looked gravely at the two men, who were standing not a foot apart. There swept slowly into his eyes, enlarging, brightening them, the glamour of the Celtic soul. Of all Ireland, or all who had ever known him, these two were the only ones welcoming him into the world again !

Michael Clones, with his oval red face, big nose, steely eye, and steadfast bearing, had in him the soul of great kings. His hat was set firmly on his head. His knee-breeches were neat, if coarse; his stockings were clean. His feet were well shod, his coat worn, and he had still the look that belongs to the well-to-do peasant. He was a figure of courage and endurance.

Dyck's hand went out to him, and a warm smile crept to his lips.

'Michael—ever faithful Michael!'

A moisture came to Michael's eyes. He did not speak as, with a look of gratitude, he clasped the hand Dyck offered him.

Presently Dyck turned to old Christopher with a kindly laugh.

'Well, old friend! You, too, come to see the stag set loose again? You're not many, that's sure.' A grim, hard look came into his face, but both hands went out and caught the old man's shoulders affectionately. 'This is no day for you to be waiting at prison's gates, Christopher; but there are two men who believe in me—two in all the world. It isn't the killing,' he added after a moment's silence—'it isn't the killing that hurts so. If it's true that I killed Erris Boyne, what hurts most is the reason why I killed him.'

'One way or another—does it matter now?' asked Christopher gently.

'Is it that you think nothing matters since I've paid the price, sunk myself in shame, lost my friends, and come out with not a penny left?' asked Dyck. 'But yes,' he added with a smile, wry and twisted, 'yes, I have a little left!'

He drew from his pocket four small pieces of gold, and gazed ironically at them in his palm.

'Look at them!' He held out his hand, so that the two men could see the little coins. 'Those were taken from me when I entered prison. They've been in the hands of the head of the jail ever since. They give them to me now—all that's left of what I was.'

'No, not all, sir,' declared Michael. 'There's something left from Playmore—there's ninety pounds, and it's in my pocket. It was got from the sale of your sporting-kit. There was the boat upon the lake, the gun, and all kinds of riffraff stuff not sold with Playmore.'

Dyck nodded and smiled.

'Good Michael!'

Then he drew himself up stiffly, and blew in and out his breath as if with the joy of living. For four hard years he had been denied the free air of free men. Even when walking in the prison-yard, on cold or fair days, when the air was like a knife or when it had the sun of summer in it, it still had seemed to choke him.

In prison he had read, thought, and worked much. They had at least done that for him. The Attorney-General had given him freedom to work with his hands, and to slave in the workshop like one whose living depended on it. Some philanthropic official had started the idea of a workshop, and the officials had given the best of the prisoners a chance to learn trades and make a little money before they went out into the world. All that Dyck had earned went to purchase things he needed, and to help his fellow prisoners or their families.

Where was he now? The gap between the old life of nonchalance, frivolity, fantasy, and excitement was as great as that between heaven and hell. Here he was, after four years of prison, walking the highway with two of the humblest creatures of Ireland, and yet, as his soul said, two of the best.

Stalking along in thought, he suddenly became conscious that Michael and Christopher had fallen behind. He turned round.

'Come on. Come on with me.'

But the two shook their heads.

'It's not fitting, you a Calhoun of Playmore!' Christopher answered.

'Well, then, list to me,' said Dyck, for he saw the men could not bear his new democracy. 'I'm hungry. In four years I haven't had a meal that came from the right place or went to the right spot. Is the little tavern, the Hen and Chickens, on the Liffeyside, still going? I mean the place where the seamen and the merchant-ship officers visit.'

Michael nodded.

'Well, look you, Michael—get you both there, and order me as good a meal of fish and chops and baked pudding as can be bought for money. Aye, and I'll have a bottle of red French wine, and you two will have what you like best. Mark me, we'll sit together there, for we're one of a kind. I've got to take to a life that fits me, an ex-jailbird, a man that's been in prison for killing!'

'There's the king's army,' said Michael. 'They make good officers in it.'

A strange, half-sore smile came to Dyck's thin lips

'Michael,' said he, 'give up these vain illusions. I was condemned for killing a man not in fair fight. I can't enter the army as an officer, and you should know it. The king himself could set me up again; but the distance between him and me is ten times round the world and back again!' But then Dyck nodded kindly. It was as if suddenly the martyr spirit had lifted him out of rigid, painful isolation, and he was speaking from a hilltop. 'No, my friends, what is in my mind now is that I'm hungry. For four years I've eaten the bread of prison, and it's soured my mouth and galled my belly. Go you to that inn and make ready a good meal.'

The two men started to leave, but old Christopher turned round and stretched a hand up and out.

'Son of Ireland, bright and black and black and bright may be the picture of your life, but I see for you brightness and sweet faces, and music and song. It's not Irish music, and it's not Irish song, but the soul of the thing is Irish. Grim things await you, but you will conquer where the eagle sways to the shore, where the white mist flees from the hills, where heroes meet, where the hand of Moira stirs the blue and the witches flee from the voice of God. There is honour coming to you in the world.'

Having said his say, with hand outstretched, having thrilled the air with the voice of one who had the soul of a prophet, the old man turned. With head bent forward, he shuffled away with Michael Clones along the stony street.

Dyck watched them go, his heart beating hard, his spirit overwhelmed.

It was not far to the Castle, yet every footstep had a history. Now and again he met people who knew him. Some bowed a little too profoundly, some nodded; but not one stopped to speak to him, though a few among them were people he had known well in days gone by. Was it the clothes he wore, or was it that his star had sunk so low that none could keep it company? He laughed to himself in scorn, and yet there kept ringing through his brain all the time the bells of St. Anselm's, which he was hearing:

Oh, God, who is the sinner's friend,
Make clean my soul once more!

When he arrived at the Castle walls he stood and looked long at them.

'No, I won't go in. I won't try to see him,' he said at last. 'God, how strange Ireland is to me! The soil of it, the trees of it, the grass of it, are dearer than ever, but—I'll have no more of Ireland. I'll ask for nothing. I'll get to England. What's Ireland to me? I must make my way somewhere. There's one in there'—he nodded toward the Castle—'that owes me money at cards. He should open his pockets to me, and see me safe on a ship for Australia; but I've had my fill of every one in Ireland. There's nothing here for me but shame. Well, back I'll go to the Hen and Chickens, to find a good dinner there.'

He turned and went back slowly along the streets by which he had come, looking not to right nor left, thinking only of where he should go and what he should do outside of Ireland.

At the door of the inn he sniffed the dinner Michael had ordered.

'Man alive!' he said as he entered the place and saw the two men with their hands against the bright fire. 'There's only one way to live, and that's the way I'm going to try.'

'Well, you'll not try it alone, sir, if you please,' said Michael. 'I'll be with you, if I may.'

'And I'll bless you as you go,' said Christopher Dogan.

Chapter XI *Whither Now?*

ENGLAND was in a state of unrest. She had, as yet, been none too successful in the war with France. From the king's castle to the poorest slum in Seven Dials there was a temper bordering on despair. Ministries came and went; statesmen rose and fell. The army was indifferently recruited and badly paid. England's battles were fought by men of whom many were only mercenaries, with no stake in England's rise or fall.

In the army and navy there were protests, many and powerful, against the smallness of the pay, while the cost of living had vastly increased. In more than one engagement on land England had had setbacks of a serious kind, and there were those who saw in the blind-eyed naval policy, in the general disregard of the seamen's position, in the means used for recruiting, the omens of disaster. The police courts furnished the navy with the worst citizens of the country. Quota men, the output of the Irish prisons—seditious, conspiring, dangerous—were drafted for the king's service.

The admiralty pursued its course of seizing men of the mercantile marine, taking them aboard ships, keeping them away for months from the harbours of the kingdom, and then, when their ships returned, denying them the right of visiting their homes. The press-gangs did not confine their activities to the men of the mercantile marine. From the streets after dusk they caught and brought in, often after ill-treatment, torn from their wives and sweethearts, knocked on the head for resisting, tradesmen with businesses, young men studying for the professions, idlers, debtors, out-of-work men. The marvel is that the British fleets fought as well as they did.

Poverty and sorrow, loss and bereavement, were in every street, peeped mournfully out of every window, lurked at street corners. From all parts of the world adventurers came to renew their fortunes in the turmoil of London, and every street was a kaleidoscope of faces and clothes and colours, not British, not patriot, not national.

Among these outlanders were Dyck Calhoun and Michael Clones. They had left Ireland together in the late autumn, leaving behind them the stirrings of the coming revolution, and plunging into another revolt which was to prove the test and trial of English character.

Dyck had left Ireland with ninety pounds in his pocket and many tons' weight of misery in his heart. In his bones he felt tragedies on foot in Ireland which concession and good government could not prevent. He had fled from it all. When he set his face to Holyhead, he felt that he would never live in Ireland again. Yet his courage was firm as he made his way to London, with Michael Clones—faithful, devoted, a friend and yet a servant, treated like a comrade, yet always with a little dominance.

The journey to London had been without event, yet as the coach rolled through country where frost silvered the trees ; where, in the early morning, the grass was shining with dew ; where the everlasting green hedges and the red roofs of villages made a picture which pleased the eye and stirred the soul, Dyck Calhoun kept wondering what would be his future. He had no profession, no trade, no skill except with his sword; and as he neared London Town—when they left Hendon—he saw the smoke rising in the early winter morning and the business of life spread out before him, brave and buoyant.

As from the heights of Hampstead he looked down on the multitudinous area called London, something throbbed at his heart which seemed like hope; for what he saw was indeed inspiring. When at last, in the Edgware Road, he drew near to living London, he turned to Michael Clones and said:

'Michael, my lad, I think perhaps we'll find a footing here.'

So they reached London, and quartered themselves there in simple lodgings in Soho. Dyck walked the streets, and now and then he paid a visit to the barracks where soldiers were, to satisfy the thought that perhaps in the life of the common soldier he might, after all, find his future. It was, however, borne in upon him by a chance remark of Michael one day—'I'm not young enough to be a recruit, and you wouldn't go alone without me, would you?'—that this way to a livelihood was not open to him.

His faithful companion's remark had fixed Dyck's mind against entering the army, and then, towards the end of the winter, a fateful thing happened. His purse containing what was left of the ninety pounds—two-fifths of it—disappeared. It had been stolen, and in all the bitter days to come, when poverty and misery ground them down, no hint of the thief, no sign of the robber, was ever revealed.

Then, at last, a day when a letter came from Ireland. It was from the firm in which Bryan Llyn of

Virginia had been interested, for the letter had been sent to their care, and Dyck had given them his address in London on this very chance. It reached Dyck's hands on the day after the last penny had been paid out for their lodgings, and they faced the streets, penniless, foodless—one was going to say friendless. The handwriting was that of Sheila Llyn.

At a street corner, by a chemist's shop where a red light burned, Dyck opened and read the letter. This is what Sheila had written to him.

'My dear Friend:

'The time is near (I understand by a late letter to my mother from an official) when you will be freed from prison and will face the world again. I have not written you since your trial, but I have never forgotten and never shall. I have been forbidden to write to you or think of you, but I will take my own way about you. I have known all that has happened since we left Ireland, through the letters my mother has received. I know that Playmore has been sold, and I am sorry.

'Now that your day of release is near, and you are to be again a free man, have you decided about your future? Is it to be in Ireland? No, I think not. Ireland is no place for a sane and level man to fight his fight for honour, fame, and name. I hear that things are worse there in every way than they have been in our lifetime.

'After what has happened in any case, it is not a field that offers you a chance. Listen to me. Ireland and England are not the only places in the world. My uncle came here to Virginia a poor man. He is now immensely rich. He had little to begin with, but he was young like you—indeed, a little older than you—

when he first came. He invested wisely, worked bravely, and his wealth grew fast. No man needs a fortune to start the business of life in this country. He can get plenty of land for almost nothing; he can get credit for planting and furnishing his land, and, if he has friends, the credit is sure.

'All America is ready for "the likes of you." Think it over, and meanwhile please know there has been placed with the firm in Dublin money enough to bring you here with comfort. You must not refuse it. Take it as a loan, for I know you will not take it as a gift.

'I do not know the story of the killing, even as it was told in court. Well, some one killed the man, but not you, and the truth will out in time. If one should come to me out of the courts of heaven, and say that there it was declared you were a rogue, I should say heaven was no place for me. No, of one thing I am sure—you never killed an undefended man. Wayward, wanton, reckless, dissipated you may have been, but you were never depraved—never!

'When you are free, lift up your shoulders to all the threats of time, then go straight to the old firm where the money is, draw it, take ship, and come here. If you let me know you are coming, I will be there to meet you when you step ashore, to give you a firm hand-clasp; to tell you that in this land there is a good place for you, if you will win it.

'Here there is little crime, though the perils of life are many. There is Indian fighting; there are Indian depredations; and not a dozen miles from where I sit men have been shot for crimes committed. The woods are full of fighters, and pirates harry the coast. On the wall of the room where I write there are carbines that have done service in Indian wars and in the Revolutionary War; and here out of the window I can see hundreds of black heads—slaves, brought from Africa and the Indies, slaves whose devotion to my uncle is very great. I hear them singing now; over the white-tipped cotton-fields there flows the sound of it.

'This plantation has none of the vices that belong to slavery. Here life is complete. The plantation is one great workshop where trades are learned and carried out—shoeing, blacksmithing, building, working in wood and metal.

'I am learning here—you see I am quite old, for I am twenty-one now—the art of management. They tell me that when my uncle's day is done—I grieve to think it is not far off—I must take the rod of control. I work very, very hard. I have to learn figures and finance; I have to see how all the work is done, so that I shall know it is done right. I have had to discipline the supervisors and bookkeepers, inspect and check the output, superintend the packing, and arrange for the sale of the crop—yes, I arranged for the sale of this year's crop myself. So I live the practical life, and when I say that you could make your home here and win success, I do it with some knowledge.

'I beg you take ship for the Virginian coast. Enter upon the new life here with faith and courage. Have no fear. Heaven that has thus far helped you will guide you to the end.

'I write without my mother's permission, but my uncle knows, and though he does not approve, he does not condemn.

'Once more good-bye, my dear friend, and God be with you.

'SHEILA LLYN.

'P.S.—I wonder where you will read this letter. I hope it will find you before your release. Please remember that she who wrote it summons you from the darkness where you are to light and freedom here.'

Slowly Dyck folded up the letter, when he had read it, and put it in his pocket. Then he turned with pale face and gaunt look to Michael Clones.

'Michael,' said he, 'that letter is from a lady. It comes from her new home in Virginia.'

Michael nodded.

'Aye, aye, sir, I understand you,' he said. 'Then she doesn't know the truth about her father?'

Dyck sighed heavily.

'No, Michael, she doesn't know the truth.'

'I don't believe it would make any difference to her if she did know.'

'It would make all the difference to me, Michael. She says she wishes to help me. She tells me that money's been sent to the big firm in Dublin—money to take me across the sea to Virginia.'

Michael's face clouded.

'Yes, sir. To Virginia—and what then?'

'Michael, we haven't a penny in the world, you and I, but if I took one farthing of that money I should hope you would kill me. I'm hungry; we've had nothing to eat since yesterday; but if I could put my hands upon that money here and now I wouldn't touch it. Michael, it looks as if we shall have to take to the trade of the foodpad.'

Chapter XII *The Hour before the Mutiny*

IN the days when Dyck Calhoun was on the verge of starvation in London, evil naval rumours were abroad. Newspapers reported, one with apprehension, another with tyrannous comment, mutinous troubles in the fleet.

At first the only demand at Spithead and the Nore had been for an increase of pay, which had not been made since the days of Charles II. Then the sailors' wages were enough for comfortable support; but in 1797 through the rise in the cost of living, and with an advance of thirty per cent. on slops, their families could barely maintain themselves. It was said in the streets, and with truth, that seamen who had fought with unconquerable gallantry under Howe, Collingwood, Nelson, and the other big sea-captains, who had borne suffering and wounds, and had been in the shadow of death—that even these men damned a system which, in its stern withdrawal of their class for long spaces of time from their own womenfolk, brought evil results to the forecastle.

The soldier was always in touch with his own social world, and he had leave sufficient to enable him to break the back of monotony. He drank, gambled, and orated; but his indulgences were little compared with the debauches of able-bodied seamen when, after months of sea-life, they reached port again. A ship in port at such a time was not a scene of evangelical habits. Women of loose class, flower-girls, fruit-sellers, and costermongers turned the forecastle into a pleasure-house where the pleasures were not always secret; where native modesty suffered no affright, and physical good cheer, with ribald paraphrase, was notable everywhere.

'How did it happen, Michael?'

As he spoke, Dyck looked round the forecastle of the *Ariadne* with a restless and inquisitive expression.

Michael was seated a few feet away, his head bent forward, his hands clasped around his knees.

'Well, it don't matter one way or 'nother,' he replied; 'but it was like this. The night you got a letter from Virginia we was penniless; so at last I went with my watch to the pawnbroker's. You said you'd wait till I got back, though you knew not where I was goin' When I got back, you were still broodin'. You were seated on a horseblock by the chemist's lamp where you had read the letter. It's not for me to say of what you were thinkin'; but I could guess. You'd been struck hard, and there had come to you a letter from one who meant more to you than all the rest of the world; and you couldn't answer it because things weren't right. As I stood lookin' at you, wonderin' what to do, though I had twelve shillin's in my pocket from the watch I'd pawned, there came four men, and I knew from their looks they were recruitin' officers of the navy. I saw what was in their eyes. They knew—as why shouldn't they, when they saw a gentleman like you in peasant clothes?—that luck had been agin' us.

'What the end would have been I don't know. It was you that solved the problem, not them. You looked at the first man of them hard. Then you got to your feet.

'"Michael," says you quietly, "I'm goin' to sea England's at war, and there's work to do. So let's make for a king's ship, and have done with misery and poverty."

'Then you waved a hand to the man in command of the recruitin' gang, and presently stepped up to him and his friends.

'"Sir," I said to you, "I'm not going to be pressed into the navy."

'"There's no pressin', Michael," you answered. "We'll be quota men. We'll do it for cash—for forty pounds each, and no other. You let them have you as you are. But if you don't want to come," you added, "it's all the same to me."

'Faith, I knew that was only talk. I knew you wanted me. Also I knew the king's navy needed me, for men are hard to get. So, when they'd paid us the cash—forty pounds apiece—I stepped in behind you, and here we are—here we are! Forty pounds apiece—equal to three years' wages of an ordinary recruit of the army. It ain't bad, but we're here for three years, and no escape from it. Yes, here we are!'

Dyck laughed.

'Aye, here we're likely to remain, Michael. There's only this to be said—we'll be fighting the French soon, and it's easy to die in the midst of a great fight. If we don't die, Michael, something else will turn up, maybe.'

'That's true, sir! They'll make an officer of you, once they see you fight. This is no place for you, among the common herd. It's the dregs o' the world that comes to the ship's bottom in time of peace or war.'

'Well, I'm the dregs of the world, Michael. I'm the supreme dregs.'

Somehow the letter from Virginia had decided Dyck Calhoun's fate for him. Here he was—at sea, a common sailor in the navy. He and Michael Clones had eaten and drunk as sailors do, and they had realized that, as they ate and drank on the River Thames, they would not eat and drink on the watery fairway. They had seen the tank foul with age, from which water was drawn for men who could not live without it, and the smell of it had revolted Dyck's senses. They had seen the kegs of pickled meat, and they had been told of the evil rations given to the sailors at sea.

The *Ariadne* had been a flag-ship in her day, the home of an admiral and his staff. She carried seventy-four guns, was easily obedient to her swift sail, and had a reputation for gallantry. From the first hour on board, Dyck Calhoun had fitted in; with a discerning eye he had understood the seamen's needs and the weaknesses of the system.

The months he had spent between his exit from prison and his entrance into the *Ariadne* had roughened, though not coarsened, his outward appearance. From his first appearance among the seamen he had set himself to become their leader. His enlistment was for three years, and he meant that these three should prove the final success of this naval enterprise, or the stark period in a calendar of tragedy.

The life of the sailor, with its coarseness and drudgery, its inadequate pay, its evil-smelling food, its maggoty bread, its beer drawn from casks that once had held oil or fish, its stinking salt-meat barrels, the hideous stench of the bilge-water—all this could in one sense be no worse than his sufferings in jail. In spite of self-control, jail had been to him the degradation of his hopes, the humiliation of his manhood. He had suffered cold, dampness, fever, and indigestion there, and it had sapped the fresh fibre of life in him.

His days in London had been cruel. He had sought work in great commercial concerns, and had almost been grateful when rejected. When his money was stolen, there seemed nothing to do, as he said to Michael Clones, but to become a footpad or a pirate.

Then the stormy doors of the navy had opened wide to him; and as many a man is tempted into folly or crime by tempestuous nature, so he, forlorn, spiritually unkempt, but physically and mentally well-composed, in a spirit of bravado, flung himself into the bowels of the fleet.

From the moment Dyck arrived on board the *Ariadne* he was a marked man. Ferens, a disfranchised solicitor, who knew his story, spread the unwholesome truth about him among the ship's people, and he received attentions at once offensive and flattering. The best-educated of the ship's hands approached him on the grievances with which the whole navy was stirring.

Something had put a new spirit into the life of his majesty's ships; it was, in a sense, the reflection of the French Revolution and Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*. What the Americans had done in establishing a republic, what France was doing by her revolution, got into the veins and minds of some men in England, but it got into the veins and minds of the sailor first; for, however low his origin, he had intercourse not given to the average landsman. He visited foreign ports, he came in touch with other elements than those of British life and character.

Of all the ships in the navy the *Ariadne* was the best that Dyck Calhoun could have entered. Her officers were humane and friendly, yet firm; and it was quite certain that if mutiny came they would be treated well. The agitation on the *Ariadne* in support of the grievances of the sailors was so moderate that, from the first, Dyck threw in his lot with it. Ferens, the former solicitor, first came to him with a list of proposals, which only repeated the demands made by the agitators at Spithead.

'You're new among us,' said Ferens to Dyck. 'You don't quite know what we've been doing, I suppose. Some of us have been in the navy for two years, and some for ten. There are men on this ship who could tell you stories that would make your blood run cold—take my word for it. There's a lot of things goin' on that oughtn't to be goin' on. The time has come for reform. Have a look at this paper, and tell me what you think.'

Dyck looked at the pockmarked face of Ferens, whose record in the courts was a bad one, and what he saw did not disgust him. It was as though Ferens had stumbled and been badly hit in his fall, but there were no signs of permanent evil in his countenance. He was square-headed, close-cropped, clear-eyed, though his face was yellow where it was not red, and his tongue was soft in his head.

Dyck read the paper slowly and carefully. Then he handed it back without a word.

'Well, what have you got to say?' asked Ferens. 'Nothing? Don't you think that's a strong list of grievances and wrongs?'

Dyck nodded.

'Yes, it's pretty strong,' he said, and he held up his hand. 'Number One, wages and cost of living. I'm sure we're right there. Cost of living was down in King Charles's time, and wages were down accordingly. Everything's gone up, and wages should go up. Number Two, the prize-money scandal. I'm with you there. I don't see why an officer should get two thousand five hundred times as much as a seaman. There ought to be a difference, but not so much. Number Three, the food ought to be better; the water ought to be better. We can't live on rum, maggoty bread, and foul water—that's sure. The rum's all right; it's powerful natural stuff, but we ought to have meat that doesn't stink, and bread that isn't alive. What's more, we ought to have lots of lime-juice, or there's no protection for us when we're out at sea with the best meat taken by the officers and the worst left to us; and with foul water and rotten food, there's no hope or help. But, if we're going in for this sort of thing, we ought to do it decently. We can't slap a government in the mouth, and we can't kick an admiral without paying heavy for it in the end. If it's wholesome petitioning you're up to, I'm with you; but I'm not if there's to be knuckle-dusting.'

Ferens shrugged a shoulder.

'Things are movin', and we've got to take our stand now when the time is ripe for it, or else lose it for ever. Over at Spithead they're gettin' their own way. The Government are goin' to send the Admiralty Board down here, because our admiral say to them that it won't be safe goin' unless they do.'

'And what are we going to do here?' asked Dyck. 'What's the game of the fleet at the Nore?'

Ferens replied in a low voice:

'Our men are goin' to send out petitions—to the Admiralty and to the House of Commons.'

'Why don't you try Lord Howe?'

'He's not in command of a fleet now. Besides, petitions have been sent him, and he's taken no notice.'

'Howe? No notice—the best admiral we ever had! I don't believe it,' declared Dyck savagely. 'Why, the whole navy believes in Howe. They haven't forgotten what he did in '94. He's as near to the seaman as the seaman is to his mother. Who sent the petitions to him?'

'They weren't signed by names—they were anonymous.'

Dyck laughed.

'Yes, and all written by the same hand, I suppose.'

Ferens nodded.

'I think that's so.'

'Can you wonder, then, that Lord Howe didn't acknowledge them? But I'm still sure he acted promptly. He's a big enough friend of the sailor to waste no time before doing his turn.'

Ferens shook his head morosely.

'That may be,' he said; 'but the petitions were sent weeks ago, and there's no sign from Lord Howe. He was at Bath for gout. My idea is he referred them to the admiral commanding at Portsmouth, and was told that behind the whole thing is conspiracy—French socialism and English politics. I give you my word there's no French agent in the fleet, and if there were, it wouldn't have any effect. Our men's grievances are not new. They're as old as Cromwell.'

Suddenly a light of suspicion flashed into Ferens's face.

'You're with us, aren't you? You see the wrongs we've suffered, and how bad it all is! Yet you haven't been on a voyage with us. You've only tasted the life in harbour. Good God, this life is heaven to what we have at sea! We don't mind the fightin'. We'd rather fight than eat.' An evil grin covered his face for a minute. 'Yes, we'd rather fight than eat, for the stuff we get to eat is hell's broil, God knows ! Did you ever think what the life of the sailor is, that swings at the top of a mast with the frost freezin' his very soul, and because he's slow, owin' to the cold, gets twenty lashes for not bein' quicker ? Well, I've seen that, and a bad sight it is. Did you ever see a man flogged ? It ain't a pretty sight. First the back takes the click of the whip like a damned washboard, and you see the ridges rise and go purple and red, and the man has his breath knocked clean out of him with every blow. Nearly every stroke takes off the skin and draws the blood, and a dozen will make the back a ditch of murder. Then the whipper stops, looks as the lashes, feels them tender like, and out and down it comes again. When all the back is ridged and scarred, the flesh, that looked clean and beautiful, becomes a bloody mass. Some men get a hundred lashes, and that's torture and death.

' A man I knew was flogged told me once that the first blow made his flesh quiver in every nerve from his toe-nails to his finger-nails, and stung his heart as if a knife had gone through his body. There was agony in his lungs, and the time between each stroke was terrible, and yet the next came too soon. He choked with the blood from his tongue, lacerated with his teeth, and from his lungs, and went black in the face. I saw his back. It looked like roasted meat ; yet he had only had eighty strokes.

' The punishments are bad. Runnin' the gauntlet is one of them. Each member of the crew is armed with three tarry rope-yarns, knotted at the ends. Then between the master-at-arms with a drawn sword and two corporals with drawn swords behind, the thief, stripped to the waist, is placed. The thing is started by a boatswain's mate givin' him a dozen lashes. Then he's slowly marched down the double line of men, who flog him as he passes, and at the end of the line he receives another dose of the cat from the boatswain's mate. The poor devil's body and head are flayed, and he's sent to hospital and rubbed with brine till he's healed.

'But the most horrible of all is flogging through the fleet. That's given for strikin' an officer, or tryin' to escape. It's a sickenin' thing. The victim is lashed by his wrists to a capstan-bar in the ship's long-boat, and all the ship's boats are lowered also, and each ship in harbour sends a boat manned by marines to attend. Then, with the master-at-arms and the ship's surgeon, the boat is cast off. The boatswain's mate begins the floggin', and the boat rows away to the half-minute bell, the drummer beatin' the rogue's march. From ship to ship the long-boat goes, and the punishment of floggin' is repeated. If he faints, he gets wine or rum, or is taken back to his ship to recover. When his back is healed he goes out to get the rest of his sentence. Very few ever live through it, or if they do it's only for a short time. They'd better have taken the hangin' that was the alternative. Even a corpse with its back bare of flesh to the bone has received the last lashes of a sentence, and was then buried in the mud of the shore with no religious ceremony.

'Mind you, there's many a man gets fifty lashes that don't deserve them. There's many men in the fleet that's stirred to anger at ill-treatment, until now, in these days, the whole lot is ready to see the thing through—to see the thing through—by heaven and by hell!'

The pockmarked face had taken on an almost ghastly fervour, until it looked like a distorted cartoon—vindictive, fanatical; but Dyck, on the edge of the river of tragedy, was not ready to lose himself in the stream of it.

As he looked round the ship he felt a stir of excitement like nothing he had ever known, though he had been brought up in a country where men were by nature revolutionists, and where the sword was as often outside as inside the scabbard. There was something terrible in a shipboard agitation not to be found in a land-rising. On land there were a thousand miles of open country, with woods and houses, caves and cliffs, to which men could flee for hiding; and therefore the danger of rebellion was less dominant. At sea, a rebellion was like some beastly struggle in one room, beyond the walls of which was everlasting nothingness. The thing had to be fought out, as it were, man to man within four walls, and God help the weaker!

'How many ships in the fleet are sworn to this agitation?' Dyck asked presently.

'Every one. It's been like a spread of infection; it's entered at every door, looked out of every window. All the ships are in it, from the twenty-six-hundred-tonners to the little five-hundred-and-fifty-tonners. Besides, there are the Delegates.'

He lowered his voice as he used these last words.

'Yes, I know,' Dyck answered, though he did not really know. 'But who is at the head?'

'Why, as bold a man as can be—Richard Parker, an Irishman. He was once a junior naval officer, and left the navy and went into business; now he is a quota man, and leads the mutiny. Let me tell you that unless there's a good round answer to what we demand, the Nore fleet 'll have it out with the Government. He's a man of character, is Richard Parker, and the fleet 'll stand by him.'

'How long has he been at it?' asked Dyck

'Oh, weeks and weeks! It doesn't all come at once, the grip of the thing. It began at Spithead, and it worked right there; and now it's workin' at the Nore, and it'll work and work until there isn't a ship and there isn't a man that won't be behind the Delegates. Look. Half the seamen on this ship have tasted the inside of a jail; and the rest come from the press-gang, and what's left are just the ragged ends of street corners. But'—and here the man drew himself up with a flush—'but there's none of us that wouldn't fight to the last gasp of breath for the navy that since the days of Elizabeth has sailed at the head of all the world. Don't think we mean harm to the fleet. We mean to do it good. All we want is that its masters shall remember we're human flesh and blood; that we're as much entitled to good food and drink on sea as on land; and that, if we risk our lives and shed our blood, we ought to have some share in the spoils. We're a great country and we're a great people, but, by God, we're not good to our own! Look at them there.'

He turned and waved a hand to the bowels of the ship where sailors traded with the slop-sellers, or chaffered with women, or sat in groups and sang, or played rough games which had no vital meaning; while here and there in groups with hands gesticulating, some fanatics declared their principles. And the principles of every man in the Nore fleet so far were embraced in the four words—wages, food, drink, prize-money.

Presently Ferens stopped short.

'Listen!' he said.

There was a cry from the ship's side not far away, and then came little busts of cheering.

'By Heaven, it's the Delegates comin' here!' he said. He held up a warning palm, as though commanding silence, while he listened intently. 'Yes, it's the Delegates. Now look at that crowd of seamen!'

He swung his hand toward the bowels of the ship. Scores of men were springing to their feet. Presently there came a great shouting and cheers, and then four new faces appeared on deck. They were faces of intelligence, but one of them had the enlightened look of leadership.

'By Judas, it's our leader, Richard Parker!' declared Ferens.

What Dyck now saw was good evidence of the progress of the agitation. There were officers of the *Ariadne* to be seen, but they wisely took no notice of the breaches of regulation which followed the arrival of the Delegates. Dyck saw Ferens speak to Richard Parker after the men had been in conference with Parker and the Delegates, and then turn toward himself. Richard Parker came to him.

'We are fellow countrymen,' he said genially. 'I know your history. We are out to make the navy better—to get the men their rights. I understand you are with us?'

Dyck bowed. 'I will do all possible to get reforms in wages and food put through, sir.'

'That's good,' said Parker. 'There are some petitions you can draft, and some letters also to the Admiralty and to the Houses of Lords and Commons.'

'I am at your service,' said Dyck.

He saw his chance to secure influence on the *Ariadne*, and also to do good to the service. Besides, he felt he might be able to check the worst excesses of the agitation, if he got power under Parker. He was free from any wish for mutiny, but he was the friend of an agitation which might end as successfully as the trouble at Spithead.

Chapter XIII *To the West Indies*

A FORTNIGHT later the mutiny at the Nore shook and bewildered the British Isles. In the public journals and in Parliament it was declared that this outbreak, like that at Spithead, was due partly to political strife, but more extensively to the operations of agents of revolution in France and Ireland.

The day after Richard Parker visited the *Ariadne* the fleet had been put under the control of the seamen's Delegates, who were men of standing in the ships, and of personal popularity. Their first act was to declare that the fleet should not leave port until the men's demands were satisfied.

The King, Prime Minister and Government had received a shock greater than that which had come with the announcement of American independence. The Government had armed the forts at Sheerness, had sent troops and guns to Gravesend and Tilbury, and had declared war upon the rebellious fleet.

At the head of the Delegates, Richard Parker, with an officer's knowledge, became a kind of bogus admiral, who, in interview with the real admirals and the representatives of the Admiralty Board, talked like one who, having power, meant to use it ruthlessly. The Government had yielded to the Spithead mutineers, giving pardon to all except the ringleaders, and granting demands for increased wages and better food, with a promise to consider the question of prize-money; but the Nore mutineers refused to accept that agreement, and enlarged the Spithead demands.

Admiral Buckner arrived on board his flag-ship, the *Sandwich,* without the deference due to an admiral, and then had to wait three hours for Parker and the Delegates on the quarter-deck. At the interview that followed, while apologizing to the admiral for his discourtesy, Parker wore his hat as quasi-admiral of the fleet. The demands of the Delegates were met by reasoning on the part of Buckner, but without effect: for the seamen of the Nore believed that what Spithead could get by obstinacy the Nore could increase by contumacy; and it was their firm will to bring the Lords of the Admiralty to their knees.

The demands of the Nore Delegates, however, were rejected by the Admiralty, and with the rejection two regiments of militia came from Canterbury to reinforce the Sheerness garrison. The mutineers were allowed to parade the town, so long as their conduct was decent, as Admiral Buckner admitted it to be; but Parker declared that the presence of the militia was an insult to the seamen in the Nore fleet.

Then ensued the beginning of the terror. When Buckner presented the Admiralty's refusal to deal with the Delegates, there came quick response. The reply of the mutineers was to row into Sheerness harbour and take away with them eight gunboats lying there, each of which fired a shot at the fort, as if to announce that the mutineers were now the avowed enemies of the Government.

Thereupon the rebels ordered all their ships together at the Great Nore, ranging them into two crescents, with the newly acquired gunboats at the flanks. The attitude of the authorities gave the violent mutineers their opportunity. Buckner's flag was struck from the mainmast-head of the *Sandwich*, and the red flag was hoisted in its place.

The Delegates would not accept an official pardon for their mutiny through Buckner. They demanded a deputation from the Admiralty, Parker declaring that no accommodation could occur without the appearance of the Lords of the Admiralty at the Nore. Then followed threatening arrangements, and the Delegates decided to blockade the Thames and the Medway.

It was at this time that Dyck Calhoun—who, by consent of Richard Parker, had taken control of the *Ariadne*—took action which was to alter the course of his own life and that of many others.

Since the beginning of the mutiny he had acted with decision, judgment, and strength. He had agreed to the *Ariadne* joining the mutinous ships, and he had skilfully constructed petitions to the Admiralty, the House of Commons, and the King. His habit of thought, his knowledge of life, made him a power. He believed that the main demands of the seamen were just, and he made a useful organization to enforce them. It was only when he saw the mutineers would not accept the terms granted to the Spithead rebels that a new spirit influenced him.

He had determined to get control of the *Ariadne*. His gift as a speaker had conquered his fellow-sailors, and the fact that he was an ex-convict gave them confidence that he was no friend of the Government.

One of the first things he did, after securing his own pre-eminence on the ship, was to get the captain and officers safely ashore. This he did with skill, and the crew of the ship even cheered them as they left.

None of the regular officers of the *Ariadne* were left upon her, except Greenock, the master of the ship, whose rank was below that of lieutenant, and whose duties were many and varied under the orders of the captain. Greenock chose to stay, though Dyck said he could go if he wished. Greenock's reply was that it was his duty to stay, if the ship was going to remain at sea, for no one else could perform his duties or do his work.

Then, by vote, Dyck became captain of the ship. He did not, however, wear a captain's uniform—the blue coat, with white cuffs, flat gold buttons; with lace at the neck, a white-sleeved waist coat, knee-breeches, white silk stockings, and a three-cornered black hat edged with gold lace and ornamented with a cockade; with a black cravat, a straight dress sword, a powdered cue tied with a black-silk ribbon, and epaulets of heavy gold stuff completing the equipment. Dyck, to the end of his career at sea, wore only the common seaman's uniform.

Dyck would not have accepted the doubtful honour had he not had long purposes in view. With Ferens, Michael Clones, and two others whom Ferens could trust, a plan was arranged which Dyck explained to his fellow-seamen on the *Ariadne.*

'We've come to the parting of the ways, brothers,' he said. 'We've all become liable to death for mutiny. The pardon offered by the king has been refused, and fresh demands are made. There, I think, a real wrong has been committed by our people. The *Ariadne* is well supplied with food and water. It is the only ship with sufficiency. And why? Because at the beginning we got provisions from the shore in time; also we got permission from Richard Parker to fill our holds from two stopped merchant-ships. Well, the rest of the fleet know what our food and drink fitment is. They know how safe we are, and to-day orders have come to yield our provisions to the rest of the fleet. That is, we, who have taken time by the forelock, must yield up our good gettings to bad receivers. I am not prepared to do it.

'On shore the Admiralty have stopped the supply of provisions to us and to all the fleet. Our men have been arrested at Gravesend, Tilbury, and Sheerness. The fleet could not sail now if it wished; but one ship can sail, and it is ours. The fleet hasn't the food to sail. On Richard Parker's ship, the *Sandwich*, there is food only for a week. The others are almost as bad. We are in danger of being attacked. Sir Erasmus Gower, of the *Neptune*, has a fleet of warships, gunboats, and amateur armed vessels getting ready to attack us. The North Sea fleet has come to help us, but that doesn't save us. I'll say this—we are loyal men in this fleet, otherwise our ships would have joined the enemy in the waters of France or Holland. They can't go now, in any case. The men have lost heart. Confidence in our cause has declined. The Government sent Lords of the Admiralty here, and they offered pardon if we accepted the terms of the Spithead settlement. We declined the terms. That was a bad day for us, and put every one of our heads in a noose.

'For the moment we have a majority in men and ships; but we can't renew our food or drink, or ammunition. The end is sure against us. Our original agitation was just; our present obduracy is madness This ship is suspected. It is believed by the rest of the fleet—by ships like the *Invincible*—that we're weak-kneed, selfish, and lacking in fidelity to the cause. That's not true; but we are in this position—we have either to fight or to run, and perhaps to do both.

'Make no mistake. The Government are not cowards; the Admiralty are gentlemen of determination. If men like Admiral Howe support the Admiralty—Howe, one of the best friends the seaman ever had—what do you think the end will be? Have you heard what happened at Spithead? The seamen chivvied Admiral Alan Gardner and his colleagues aboard a ship. He caught hold of a seaman Delegate by the collar and shook him. They closed in on him. They handled him roughly. He sprang on the hammock-nettings, put the noose of the hanging-rope round his neck, and said to the men who advanced menacingly:

'"If you will return to your duty, you may hang me at the yard-arm!"

'That's the kind of stuff our admirals are made of. We have no quarrel with the majority of our officers. They're straight, they're honest, and they're true to their game. Our quarrel is with Parliament and the Admiralty; our struggle is with the people of the kingdom, who have not seen to it that our wrongs are put right, that we have food to eat, water to drink and money to spend.'

He waved a hand, as though to sweep away the criticisms he felt must be rising against him.

'Don't think because I've spent four years in prison under the sternest discipline the world offers, and have never been a seaman before, that I'm not fitted to espouse your cause. By Heaven, I am—I am—I am! I know the wrongs you've suffered. I've smelled the water you drink. I've tasted the rotten meat. I've seen the honest seaman who has been for years upon the main—I've seen the scars upon his back got from a brutal officer who gave him too big a job to do, and flogged him for not doing it. I know of men who, fevered with bad food, have fallen, from the mainmast head, or have slipped overboard, glad to go, because of the wrongs they'd suffered.

'I'll tell you what our fate will be, and then I'll put a question to you. We must either give up our stock of provisions or run for it. Parker and the other Delegates proclaim their comradeship ; yet they have hidden from us the king's proclamation and the friendly resolutions of the London merchants. I say our only hope is to escape from the Thames. I know that skill will be needed, but if we escape, what then ? I say if we escape, because, as we sail out, orders will be given for the other mutiny ships to attack us. We shall be fired on ; we shall risk our lives. You've done that before, however, and will do it again.

'We have to work out our own problem and fight our own fight. Well, what I want to know is this—are we to give in to the Government, or do we stand to be hammered by Sir Erasmus Gower ? Remember what that means. It means that if we fight the Government ships, we must either die in battle, or die with the ropes round our necks. There is another way. I'm not inclined to surrender, or to stand by men who have botched our business for us. I'm for making for the sea, and, when I get there, I'm for striking for the West Indies, where there's a British fleet fighting Britain's enemies, and for joining in and fighting with them. I'm for getting out of this river and away from England. It's a bold plan, but it's a good one. I want to know if you're with me. Remember, there's danger getting out, and there's danger when and if we get out. The other ships may pursue us. The Portsmouth fleet may nab us. We may be caught, and, if we are, we must take the dose prepared for us ; but I'm for making a strong rush, going without fear, and asking no favour. I won't surrender here ; it's too cowardly.

I want to know, will you come to the open sea with me?'

There were many shouts of assent from the crowd, though here and there came a growl of dissent.

'Not all of you are willing to come with me,' Dyck continued vigorously. 'Tell me, what is it you expect to get by staying here? You're famished when you're not poisoned; you're badly clothed and badly fed; you're kept together by flogging; you're treated worse than a convict in jail or a victim in a plague hospital. You're not paid as well as your grandfathers were, and you're punished worse. Here, on the *Ariadne*, we're not skulkers. We don't fear our duty; we are loyal men. Many of you, on past voyages, fighting the enemy, lived on burgoo and molasses only, with rum and foul water to drink. On the other ships there have been terrible cruelty and offence. Surgeons have neglected and ill-treated sick men and embezzled provisions and drinks intended for the invalids. Many a man has died because of the neglect of the ship's surgeons; many have been kicked about the head and beaten, and haven't dared to go on the sick list for fear of their officers. The Victualling Board gets money to supply us with food and drink according to measure. They get the money for a full pound and a full gallon, and we get fourteen ounces of food and seven pints of liquor, or less. Well, what do you say, friends, to being our own Victualling Board out in the open sea, if we can get there?

'We may have to fight when we get out; but I'm for taking the *Ariadne* into the great world battle when we can find it. This I want to ask—isn't it worth while making a great fight in our own way, and showing that British seamen can at once be mutineers and patriots? We have a pilot who knows the river. We can go to the West Indian Islands, to the British fleet there. It's doom and death to stay here; and it may be doom and death to go. If we try to break free, and are fired on, the Admiralty may approve of us, because we've broken away from the rest. See now, isn't that the thing to do? I'm for getting out. Who's coming with me?'

Suddenly a burly sailor pushed forward. He had the head of a viking. His eyes were strong with enterprise. He had a hand like a ham, with long, hairy fingers.

'Captain,' said he, 'you've put the thing so there can be only one answer to it. As for me, I'm sick of the way this mutiny has been bungled from first to last. There's been one good thing about it only—we've got order without cruelty, we've rebelled without ravagement; but we've missed the way, and we didn't deal with the Admiralty commissioners as we ought. So I'm for joining up with the captain here'—he waved a hand toward Dyck—'and making for open sea. As sure as God's above, they'll try to hammer us; but it's the only way.'

He held a handkerchief—a dirty, red silk thing.

'See,' he continued, 'the wind is right to take us out. The other ships won't know what we're going to do until we start. I'm for getting off. I'm a pressed man. I haven't seen my girl for five years, and they won't let me free in port to go and see her. Nothing can be worse than what we have to suffer now, so let's make a break for it. That's what I say. Come, now, lads, three cheers for Captain Calhoun!'

A half-hour later, on the captain's deck, Dyck gave the order to pass eastward. It was sunset when they started, and they had not gone a thousand yards before some of the mutineering ships opened fire on the *Ariadne*. The breeze was good, however, and she sailed bravely through the leaden storm. Once—twice—thrice she was hit, but she sped on. Two men were killed and several were wounded. Sails were torn, and the high bulkheads were broken; but, without firing a shot in reply, the *Ariadne* swung clear at last of the hostile ships and reached safe water.

On the edge of the open sea Dyck took stock of the position. The *Ariadne* had been hit several times, and the injury done her was marked. Before morning the dead seamen were sunk in watery graves, and the wounded were started back to health again. By daylight the *Ariadne* was well away from the land.

The first thing Dyck had done, after escaping from the river, was to study the wants of the *Ariadne* and make an estimate for the future with Greenock, the master. He calculated they had food and water enough to last for three months, even with liberal provisioning. Going among the crew, he realized there was no depression among them; that they seemed to care little where they were going. It was, however, quite clear they wished to fight—to fight the enemies of England.

He knew his task was a hard one, and that all efforts at discipline would have dangers. He knew, also, that he could have no authority, save personality and success. He set himself, therefore, to win the confidence of Greenock and the crew, and he began discipline at once. He knew that a reaction must come; that the crew, loose upon their own trail, would come to regret the absence of official command. He realized that many of them would wish to return to the fleet at the Nore, but while the weather was good he did not fear serious trouble. The danger would come in rough weather or on a becalmed sea.

They had passed Beachy Head in the mist. They had seen no battle-ship, and had sighted no danger, as they made their way westward through the Channel. There had been one moment of anxiety. That was when they passed Portsmouth, and had seen in the far distance, to the right of them, the mastheads of Admiral Gardner's fleet.

It was here that Dyck's orderly, Michael Clones, was useful. He brought word of murmuring among the more brutish of the crew, that some of them wished to join Gardner's fleet. At this news, Dyck went down among the men. It was an unusual thing to do, but it brought matters to an issue.

Among the few dissatisfied sailors was one Nick Swaine, who had been the cause of more trouble on the *Ariadne* than any other. He had a quarrelsome mind ; he had been influenced by the writings of Wolfe Tone, the Irish rebel. One of the secrets of Dyck's control of the crew was the fact that he was a gentleman, and was born in the ruling class, and this was anathema to Nick Swaine. His view of democracy was ignorance controlling ignorance.

By nature he was insolent, but under the system of control pursued by the officers of the *Ariadne*, previous to the mutiny, he had not been able to do much. The system had bound him down. He had been the slave of habit, custom, and daily duty. His record, therefore, was fairly clean until two days after the escape from the Thames and the sighting of the Portsmouth fleet. Then all his revolutionary spirit ran riot in him. Besides, the woman to whom he had become attached at the Nore had been put ashore on the day Dyck gained control. It roused his enmity now.

When Dyck came down, he had the gunners called to him, admonishing them that drill must go on steadily, and promising them good work to do. Then he turned to the ordinary seamen.

At this moment Nick Swaine attempted his enterprise. He strode forward within a dozen feet of Dyck.

'Look there!' he said, and he jerked a finger toward the distant Portsmouth fleet. 'Look there! You've passed that.'

Dyck shrugged a shoulder.

'I meant to pass it,' he said quietly.

'Give orders to make for it,' said Nick with a sullen eye.

'I shall not. And look you, my man, keep a civil tongue to me, who command this ship, or I'll have you put in irons.'

'Have me put in irons!' Swaine cried hotly. 'This isn't Dublin jail. You can't do what you like here. Who made you captain of this ship?'

'Those who made me captain will see my orders carried out. Now, get you back with the rest, or I'll see if they still hold good.' Dyck waved a hand. 'Get back when I tell you, Swaine!'

'When you've turned the ship to the Portsmouth fleet I'll get back, and not till then.'

Dyck made a motion of the hand to some boatswains standing by. Before they could arrest him, Swaine flung himself towards Dyck with a knife in his hand.

Dyck's hand was quicker, however. His pistol flung out, a shot was fired, and the knife dropped from the battered fingers of Nick Swaine.

'Have his wounds dressed, then put him in irons,' Dyck commanded.

From that moment, in good order and in good weather, the *Ariadne* sped on her way westward and southward.

Chapter XIV *In the Nick of Time*

PERHAPS no mutineer in the history of the world ever succeeded, as did Dyck Calhoun, in holding control over fellow-mutineers on the journey from the English Channel to the Caribbean Sea. As a boy, Dyck had been an expert sailor, had studied the machinery of a man-of-war, and his love of the sea was innate and deep-seated; but his present success was based upon more than experience. Quite apart from the honour of his nature, prison had deepened in him the hatred of injustice. In soul he was bitter; in body he was healthy, powerful, and sane.

Slowly, sternly, yet tactfully, he had broken down the many customs of ship life injurious to the welfare of the men. Under his system the sailors had good coffee for breakfast, instead of a horrible mixture made of burnt biscuits cooked in foul water. He gave the men pea-soup and rice instead of burgoo and the wretched oatmeal mess which was the staple thing for breakfast. He saw to it that the meat was no longer a hateful, repulsive mass, two-thirds bone and gristle, and before it came into the cook's hands capable of being polished like mahogany. He threatened the cook with punishment if he found the meals ill-cooked.

In all the journey to the West Indian seas there had been only three formal floggings. His attitude was not that of the commander who declared:

'I will see the man's backbone, by God!'

He wished to secure discipline without cruelty. His greatest difficulty, at the start, was in making lieutenants. That he overcame by appointing senior midshipmen before the *Ariadne* was out of the Channel. He offered a lieutenancy to Ferens, who had the courage to decline it.

'Make me purser,' remarked Ferens. 'Make me purser, and I'll do the job justly.'

As the purser of the *Ariadne* had been sent to the sick-bay and was likely to die (and did die subsequently), Ferens was put into his uniform—three-cornered cocked hat, white knee-breeches, and white stockings. The purser of a man-of-war was generally a friend of the captain, going with him from ship to ship.

Of the common sailors, on the whole, Dyck had little doubt. He had informed them that, whatever happened, they should not be in danger; that the ship should not join the West Indian fleet unless every man except himself received amnesty. If the amnesty was not granted, then one of two things should happen—the ship must make for a South American port, or she must fight. Fighting would not frighten these men.

It was rather among the midshipmen that Dyck looked for trouble. Sometimes, with only two years' training at Gosport, a youngster became a midshipman on first going to sea, and he could begin as early as eleven years of age. A second-rate ship like the *Ariadne* carried eighteen midshipmen; and as six lieutenants were appointed from them, only twelve remained. From these twelve, in the dingy after-cockpit, where the superficial area was not more than twelve square feet; where the air was foul, and the bilges reeked with a pestilential stench; where the purser's store-room near gave out the smell of rancid butter and poisonous cheese; where the musty taint of old ropes came to them, there was a spirit of danger.

Dyck was right in thinking that in the midshipmen's dismal berth the first flowers of revolt to his rule would bloom.

Sailors, even as low as the pig-sty men, had some idea of fair play; and as the weeks that had passed since they left the Thames had given them better food and drink, and lessened the severity of those above them, real obedience had come.

It was not strange that the ship ran well, for all the officers under the new conditions, except Dyck himself, had had previous experience. The old lieutenants had gone, but midshipmen, who in any case were trained, had taken their places. The rest of the ship's staff were the same, except the captain; and as Dyck had made a friend of Greenock the master, a man of glumness, the days were peaceful enough during the voyage to the Caribbean Sea.

The majority saw that every act of Dyck had proved him just and capable. He had rigidly insisted on gun practice; he had keyed up the marines to a better spirit, and churlishness had been promptly punished. He was, in effect, what the sailors called a 'rogue,' or a 'taut one'—seldom smiling, gaunt of face but fearless of eye, and with a body free from fatigue.

As the weather grew warmer and the days longer, and they drew near to the coast of Jamaica, a stir of excitement was shown.

'You'd like to know what I'm going to do, Michael, I suppose?' said Dyck one morning, as he drank his coffee and watched the sun creeping up the sky.

'Well, in three days we shall know what's to become of us, and I have no doubt or fear. This ship's a rebel, but it's returning to duty. We've shown them how a ship can be run with good food and drink and fair dealing, and, please God, we'll have some work to do now that belongs to a man-of-war!'

'Sir, I know what you mean to do,' replied Michael. 'You mean to get all of us off by giving yourself up.'

'Well, some one has to pay for what we've done, Michael.' A dark, ruthless light came into Dyck's eyes. 'Some one's got to pay.' A grim smile crossed his face. 'We've done the forbidden thing; we've mutinied and taken to the open sea. We were fired on by the other mutiny ships, and that will help our sailors, but it won't help me. I'm the leader. We ought, of course, to have taken refuge with the nearest squadron of the king's ships. Well, I've run my luck, and I'll have to pay.'

He scratched his chin with a thumb-nail—a permanent physical trait. 'You see, the Government has pardoned all the sailors, and will hang only the leaders. I expect Parker is hung already. Well, I'm the leader on the *Ariadne*. I'm taking this ship straight to his majesty's West Indian fleet, in thorough discipline, and I'll hand it over well-found, well-manned, well-officered, on condition that all go free except myself. I came aboard a common sailor, a quota man, a prison-bird, penniless. Well, have I shown that I can run a ship? Have I learned the game of control? During the weeks we've been at sea, bursting along, have I proved myself?'

Michael smiled.

'What did I say to you the first night on board, sir? Didn't I say they'd make an officer of you when they found out what brains you had? By St. Patrick, you've made yourself captain with the good-will of all, and your iron hand has held the thing together. You've got a great head, too, sir!'

Dyck looked at him with a face in which the far future showed.

'Michael, I've been lucky. I've had good men about me. God only knows what would have happened to me if the master hadn't been what he is—a gentleman who knows his job—aye, a gentleman through and through! If he had gone against me, Michael'—he flicked a finger to the sky—'well, that much for my chances! I'd have been dropped overboard, or stabbed in my cabin, as was that famous Captain Pigot, son of an admiral, who had as much soul as you'd find in a stone-quarry. When two men had dropped from the masts, hurrying to get down because of his threat that the last man should be thrashed—when the two men lay smashed to pieces at his feet, Pigot said, "Heave the lubbers overboard!" That night, Michael, the seamen rose, crept to his cabin, stabbed him to death, pitched his body overboard, put his lieutenants to sea in open boats, and then ran away to South America. Well, I've escaped that fate, because this was a good ship, and all the officers knew their business, and did it without cruelty. I've been well served. It was a great thing making the new lieutenants from the midshipmen. There never was a better lot on board a ship.'

Michael's face clouded.

'Sir, that's true. The new lieutenants have done their work well, but them that's left behind in the midshipmen's berth—do you think they're content? No, sir. The only spot on board this ship where there lurks an active spirit against you is in the midshipmen's berth. Mischief's brewing there, and that's what has brought me to you now.'

Dyck smiled.

'I know that. I've had my eye on the midshipmen. I've never trusted them. They're a hard lot; but if the rest of the ship is with me, I'll deal with them promptly. They're not clever or bold enough to do their job skilfully. They've got some old hands down there—hammock-men, old stagers of the sea that act as servants to them. What line do they take?'

Michael laughed softly.

'What I know I've got from two of them, and it is this—the young gentlemen 'll try to get control of the ship.'

The cynicism deepened in Dyck's face.

'Get control of the ship, eh? Well, it'll be a new situation on a king's ship if midshipmen succeed where the rest dare not try. Now, mark what I'm going to do.'

He called, and a marine showed himself.

'The captain's compliments to the master, and his presence here at once. Michael,' he continued presently, 'what fools they are! They're scarcely a baker's dozen, and none of them has skill to lead. Why, the humblest sailor would have more sense than to start a revolt, the success of which depends upon his personal influence, and the failure of which must end in his own ruin. Does any one think they're the kind to lead a mutiny within a mutiny? Listen to me—I'm not cruel, but I'll put an end to this plot. We're seven hundred on this ship, and she's a first-class sailer. I warrant no ship ever swam the seas that looks better going than she does. So we've got to see that her record is kept clean as a mutineer.'

At that moment the master appeared. He saluted.

'Greenock,' said Dyck, 'I wonder if you've noticed the wind blowing chilly from the midshipmen's berth.'

A lurking devilish humour shot from Greenock's eyes.

'Aye, I've smelled that wind. It's ugly.'

'Greenock, we're near the West Indian Islands. Before we eat many meals we'll see land. We may pass French ships, and we may have to fight. Well, we've had a good running, master; so I'll tell you what I mean to do.'

He then briefly repeated what he had said to Michael, and added:

'Greenock, in this last to-do, I shall be the only man in danger. The king's amnesty covers every one except the leaders—that lets you off. The Delegate of the *Ariadne* is aboard the *Invincible*, if he's not been hanged. I'm the only one left on the *Ariadne*. I've had a good time, Greenock—thanks to you, chiefly. I think the men are ready for anything that'll come; but I also think we should guard against a revolt of the midshipmen by healthy discipline now. Therefore I'll instruct the lieutenants to spread-eagle every midshipman for twelve hours. There's a stiff wind; there's a good stout spray, and the wind and spray should cool their hot souls. Meanwhile, though without food, they shall have water as they need it. If at the end of the twelve hours any still seems to be difficult, give him another twelve. Look!'

He stretched out a hand to the porthole on his right.

'Far away in front are islands. You cannot see them yet, but those little thickening mists in the distance mean land. Those are the islands in front of the Windward Passage. I think it would be a good lesson for the young gentlemen to be spread-eagled against the mists of their future. It shall be done at once; and pass the word why it's done.'

An hour later there was laughter in every portion of the ship, for the least popular members of the whole personnel were being dragooned into discipline. The sailors had seen individual midshipmen spread-eagled and mastheaded, while all save those they could bribe were forbidden to bring them drink or food; but here was a whole body of junior officers, punished *en masse*, as it were, lashed to the rigging and taking the wind and the spray in their teeth.

Before the day was over, the whole ship was alive with anticipation, for, in the far distance, could be seen the dark blue and purplish shadows which told of land; and this brought the minds of all to the end of their journey, with thoughts of the crisis near.

Word had been passed that all on board were considered safe—all except the captain who had manœuvred them to the entrance of the Caribbean Sea. Had he been of their own origin, they would not have placed so much credence in the rumour; but coming as he did of an ancient Irish family, although he had been in jail for killing, the traditional respect for the word of a gentleman influenced them. When a man like Ferens, on the one hand, and the mutineer whose fingers had been mutilated by Dyck in the Channel, on the other—when these agreed to bend themselves to the rule of a usurper, some idea of Calhoun's power may be got.

On this day, with the glimmer of land in the far distance, the charges of all the guns were renewed. Also word was passed that at any moment the ship must be cleared for action. Down in the cockpit the tables were got ready by the surgeon and the loblollyboys; the magazines were opened, and the guards were put on duty.

Orders were issued that none should be allowed to escape active share in the coming battle; that none should retreat to the orlop deck or the lower deck; that the boys should carry the cartridge-cases handed to them from the magazine under the cover of their coats, running hard to the guns. The twenty-four-pounders—the largest guns in use at the time—the eighteen-pounders, and the twelve-pounder guns were all in good order.

The bags of iron balls called grape-shot—the worst of all—varying in size from sixteen to nine balls in a bag, were prepared. Then the canister, which produced ghastly murder, chain-shot to bring down masts and spars, langrel to fire at masts and rigging, and the dismantling shot to tear off sails, were all made ready. The muskets for the marines, the musketoons, the pistols, the cutlasses, the boarding-pikes, the axes or tomahawks, the bayonets and sailors' knives, were placed conveniently for use. A bevy of men were kept busy cleaning the round shot of rust, and there was not a man on the ship who did not look with pride at the guns, in their paint of grey-blue steel, with a scarlet band round the muzzle.

To the right of the *Ariadne* was the coast of Cuba; to the left was the coast of Haiti, both invisible to the eye. Although the knowledge that they were nearing land had already given the officers and men a feeling of elation, the feeling was greatly intensified as they came through the Turk Island Passage, which is a kind of gateway to the Windward Passage between Cuba and Haiti. The glory of the sunny, tropical world was upon the ship and upon the sea; it crept into the blood of every man, and the sweet summer weather gave confidence to their minds. It was a day which only those who know tropical and semi-tropical seas can understand. It had the sense of soaking luxury.

In his cabin, with the ship's chart on the table before him, Dyck Calhoun studied the course of the *Ariadne.* The wind was fair and good, the sea-birds hovered overhead. From a distant part of the ship came the sound of men's voices in song. They were singing 'Spanish Ladies':

We hove our ship to when the wind was sou'west, boys,
We hove our ship to for to strike soundings clear;
Then we filled our main tops'l and bore right away, boys,
And right up the Channel our course did we steer.

'We'll rant and we'll roar like true British sailors,
We'll range and we'll roam over all the salt seas,
Until we strike soundings in the Channel of old England—
From Ushant to Scilly 'tis thirty-five leagues.'

Dyck raised his head, and a smile came to his lips.

'Yes, you sing of a Channel, my lads, but it's a long way there, as you'll find. I hope to God they give us some fighting! . . . Well, what is it?' he asked of a marine who appeared in his doorway.

'The master of the ship begs to see you, sir,' was the reply.

A moment afterward Greenock entered. He asked Dyck several questions concerning the possible fighting, the disposition of ammunition and all that, and said at last:

'I think we shall be of use, sir. The ship's all right now.'

'As right as anything human can be. I've got faith in my star, master.'

A light came into the other man's dour face.

'I wish you'd get into uniform, sir.'

'Uniform? No, Greenock! No, I use the borrowed power, but not the borrowed clothes. I'm a common sailor, and I wear the common sailor's clothes. You've earned your uniform, and it suits you. Stick to it; and when I've earned a captain's uniform I'll wear it. I owe you the success of this voyage so far, and my heart is full of it, up to the brim. Hark, what's that?'

'By God, it's guns, sir! There's fighting on!'

'Fighting!'

Dyck stood for a minute with head thrust forward, eyes fixed upon the distant mists ahead. The rumble of the guns came faintly through the air. An exultant look came into his face.

'Master, the game's with us—it *is* fighting! I know the difference between the two sets of guns, English and French. Listen—that quick, spasmodic firing is French; the steady-as-thunder is English. Well, we've got all sail on. Now, make ready the ship for fighting!'

'She's almost ready, sir.'

An hour later the light mist had risen, and almost suddenly the *Ariadne* seemed to come into the field of battle. Dyck Calhoun could see the struggle going on. The two sets of enemy ships had come to close quarters, and in some cases were locked in deadly conflict. In other cases ships, still apart, fired at point-blank range, and all the horrors of slaughter were in full swing.

From the square blue flag at the mizzen topgallant masthead of one of the British ships engaged, Dyck realized that the admiral's own craft was in some peril. He saw with satisfaction that the way lay open for the *Ariadne* to bear down upon the French ship engaged with the admiral's smaller ship, and help to end the struggle successfully for the British cause.

While still too far away for point-blank range, the *Ariadne's* guns began upon the French ships distinguishable by their shape and their colours. Before the first shot was fired, however, Dyck made a tour of the decks and gave some word of cheer to the men. The *Ariadne* lost no time in getting into the thick of the fight. The seamen were stripped to the waist, and black silk handkerchiefs were tightly bound round their heads and over their ears.

What the French thought of the coming of the *Ariadne* was shown by the reply they made presently to her firing. The number of French ships in action was greater than the British by six, and the *Ariadne* arrived just when she could be of greatest service. The boldness of her seamanship, and the favour of the wind, gave her an advantage which good fortune helped to justify.

As she drew in upon the action, she gave herself up to great danger; she was coming in upon the rear of the French ships, and was subject to fierce attack. To the French she seemed like a fugitive warrior returning to his camp just when he was most needed, as was indeed the case. Two of her shots settled one of the enemy's vessels; and before the others could converge upon her, she had crawled slowly up against the off side of the French admiral's ship, which was closely engaged with the *Beatitude*, the British flagship, on the other side.

The canister, chain-shot, and langrel of the French foe had caused much injury to the *Ariadne*, and her canvas was in a sore plight. Fifty of her seamen had been killed, and a hundred and fifty were wounded by the time she reached the starboard side of the *Aquitaine.* She would have lost many more were it not that her onset demoralized the French gunners, while the cheers of the British sailors aboard the *Beatitude* gave confidence to their mutineer comrades.

On his own deck, Dyck watched the progress of the battle with the joy of a natural fighter. He had carried the thing to an almost impossible success. There had only been this in his favour, that his was an unexpected entrance—a fact which had been worth another ship at least. He saw his boarders struggle for the *Aquitaine.* He saw them discharge their pistols, and then resort to the cutlass and the dagger; and the marines bringing down their victims from the masts of the French flag-ship.

Presently he heard the savagely buoyant shouts of the *Beatitude* men, and he realized that, by his coming, the admiral of the French fleet had been obliged to yield up his sword, and to signal to his ships—such as could—to get away. That half of them succeeded in doing so was due to the fact that the British fleet had been heavily handled in the fight, and would have been defeated had it not been for the opportune arrival of the *Ariadne.*

Never, perhaps, in the history of the navy had British ships clamped the enemy as the *Aquitaine* was clamped by the *Beatitude* and the *Ariadne.* Certain it is that no admiral of the British fleet had ever to perform two such acts in one day as receiving the submission of a French admiral and offering thanks to the captain of a British man-of-war whom, while thanking, he must at once place under arrest as a mutineer.

What might have chanced further to Dyck's disadvantage can never be known, because there appeared on the deck of the *Beatitude*, as its captain under the rear-admiral, Captain Ivy, who, five years before, had visited Dyck and his father at Playmore, and had gone with them to Dublin.

The admiral had sent word to the *Ariadne* for its captain to come to the *Beatitude*. When the captain's gig arrived, and a man in seaman's clothes essayed to climb the side of the flag-ship, he was at first prevented. Captain Ivy, however, immediately gave orders for Dyck to be admitted, but without honours.

On the deck of the *Beatitude*, Dyck looked into the eyes of Captain Ivy. He saluted; but the captain held out a friendly hand.

'You're a mutineer, Calhoun, but your ship has given us the victory. I'd like to shake hands with the man that's done so good a stroke for England.'

A queer smile played about Calhoun's lips.

'I've brought the *Ariadne* back to the fleet, Captain Ivy. The men have fought as well as men ever did since Britain had a navy. I've brought her back to the king's fleet to be pardoned.'

'But you must be placed under arrest, Calhoun. Those are the orders—that wherever the *Ariadne* should be found she should be seized, and that you should be tried by court-martial.'

Dyck nodded.

'I understand. When did you get word?'

'About forty-eight hours ago. The king's mail came by a fast frigate.'

'We took our time, but we came straight from the Channel to find this fleet. At the mouth of the Thames we were determined to find it, and to fight with it—and by good luck so we have done.'

'Let me take you to the admiral,' said Captain Ivy.

He walked beside Dyck to the admiral's cabin.

'You've made a terrible mess of things, Calhoun, but you've put a lot right to-day,' he said at the entrance to the cabin. 'Tell me one thing honestly before we part now—did you kill Erris Boyne?'

Dyck looked at him long and hard.

'I don't know—on my honour I don't know! I don't remember—I was drunk and drugged.'

'Calhoun, I don't believe you did; but if you did, you've paid the price—and the price of mutiny, too.' In the clear blue eyes of Captain Ivy there was a look of friendliness. 'I notice you don't wear uniform, Calhoun,' he added. 'I mean a captain's uniform.'

Dyck smiled.

'I never have.'

The next moment the door of the admiral's cabin was opened.

'Mr. Dyck Calhoun of the *Ariadne*, sir,' said Captain Ivy.

Chapter XV *The Admiral has His Say*

THE admiral's face was naturally vigorous and cheerful, but, as he looked at Dyck Calhoun, a steely hardness came into it, and gave a cynical twist to the lips. He was a short man, and spare, but his bearing had dignity and every motion significance.

He had had his high moment with the French admiral, had given his commands to the fleet and had arranged the disposition of the captured French ships. He was in good spirits, and the wreckage in the fleet seemed not to shake his nerve, for he had lost in men far less than the enemy, and had captured many ships—a good day's work, due finally to the man in sailor's clothes standing there with Captain Ivy. The admiral took in the dress of Calhoun at a glance—the trousers of blue cloth, the sheath-knife belt, the stockings of white silk, the white shirt with the horizontal stripes, the loose, unstarched, collar, the fine black silk handkerchief at the throat, the waistcoat of red kerseymere, the shoes like dancing-pumps, and the short, round blue jacket, with the flat gold buttons—a seaman complete. He smiled broadly; he liked this mutineer and ex-convict.

'*Captain* Calhoun, eh! he remarked mockingly, and bowed with satirical profundity. 'Well, you've played a strong game, and you've plunged us into great difficulty.'

Dyck did not lose his opportunity. 'Happily, I've done what I planned to do when we left the Thames, admiral,' he said. 'We came to get the chance of doing what, by favour of fate, we have accomplished. Now, sir, as I'm under arrest, and the ship which I controlled has done good service, may I beg that the *Ariadne's* personnel shall have amnesty, and that I alone be made to pay—if that must be—for the mutiny at the Nore.'

The admiral nodded. 'We know of your breaking away from the mutinous fleet, and of their firing on you as you passed, and that is in your favour. I can also say this : that bringing the ship here was masterly work, for I understand there were no officers on the *Ariadne*. She always had the reputation of being one of the best-trained ships in the navy, and she has splendidly upheld that reputation How did you manage it, Mr. Calhoun ? '

Dyck briefly told how the lieutenants were made, and how he himself had been enormously indebted to Greenock, the master of the ship, and all the subordinate officers.

The admiral smiled sourly. 'I have little power until I get instructions from the Admiralty, and that will take some time. Meanwhile, the *Ariadne* shall go on as she is, and as if she were—and had been from the first, a member of my own squadron.'

Dyck bowed, explained what reforms he had created in the food and provisions of the *Ariadne*, and expressed a hope that nothing should be altered. He declared the ship had proved herself, chiefly because of his reforms.

'Besides, she's been badly hammered. She's got great numbers of wounded and dead, and for many a day the men will be busy with repairs.'

'For a man without naval experience, for a mutineer, an ex-convict and a usurper, you've done quite well, Mr. Calhoun; but my instructions were, if I captured your ship, and you fell into my hands, to try you, and hang you.'

At this point Captain Ivy intervened.

'Sir,' he said, 'the instructions you received were general. They could not anticipate the special service which the *Ariadne* has rendered to the king's fleet. I have known Mr. Calhoun; I have visited at his father's house; I was with him on his journey to Dublin, which was the beginning of his bad luck. I would beg of you, sir, to give Mr. Calhoun his parole on sea and land until word comes from the Admiralty as to what, in the circumstances, his fate shall be.'

'To be kept on the *Beatitude* on parole!' exclaimed the admiral.

'Land or sea, Captain Ivy said. I'm as well-born as any man in the king's fleet,' declared Dyck. 'I've as clean a record as any officer in his majesty's navy, save for the dark fact that I was put in prison for killing a man; and I will say here, in the secrecy of an admiral's cabin, that the man I killed—or was supposed to kill—was a traitor. If I did kill him, he deserved death by whatever hand it came. I care not what you do with me'—his hands clenched, his shoulders drew up, his eyes blackened with the dark fire of his soul—'whether you put me on parole, or try me by court-martial, or hang me from the yard-arm. I've done a piece of work of which I'm not ashamed. I've brought a mutinous ship out of mutiny, sailed her down the seas for many weeks, disciplined her, drilled her, trained her, fought her; helped to give the admiral of the West Indian squadron his victory. I enlisted; I was a quota man. I became a common sailor—I and my servant and friend, Michael Clones. I shared the feelings of the sailors who mutinied. I wrote petitions and appeals for them. I mutinied with them. Then at last, having been made leader of the ship, with the captain and the lieutenants sent safely ashore, and disagreeing with the policy of the delegates in not accepting the terms offered, I brought the ship out, commanding it from the captain's cabin, and have so continued until to-day. If I'm put ashore at Jamaica, I'll keep my parole; if I stay a prisoner here, I'll keep my parole. If I've done you service, admiral, be sure of this, it was done with clear intent. My object was to save the men who, having mutinied and fled from Admiralty control, are subject to capital punishment.'

'Your thinking came late. You should have thought before you mutinied,' was the sharp reply.

'As a common sailor I acted on my conscience, and what we asked for the Admiralty has granted. Only by mutiny did the Admiralty yield to our demands. What I did I would do again! We took our risks in the Thames against the guns that were levelled at us; we've taken our risks down here against the French to help save your squadron, and we've done it. The men have done it, because they've been loyal to the flag, and from first to last set to make the Admiralty and the people know they have rights which must be cherished. If all your men were as faithful to the Crown as are the men on the *Ariadne*, then they deserve well of the king. But will you put for me on paper the written word that every man now aboard the *Ariadne* shall be held guiltless in the eyes of the admiral of this fleet; that the present officers shall remain officers, that the reforms I have made shall become permanent? For myself, I care not; but for the men who have fought under me, I want their amnesty. And I want Michael Clones to be kept with me, and Greenock, the master, and Ferens, the purser, to be kept where they are. Admiral, I think you know my demands are just. Over there on the *Ariadne* are a hundred and fifty wounded at least, and fifty have been killed. Let the living not suffer.'

'You want it all on the nail, don't you?'

'I want it at this moment when the men who have fought under me have helped to win your battle, sir.'

There was something so set in Dyck's voice that the admiral had a sudden revulsion against him, yet, after a moment of thought, he made a sign to Captain Ivy.

Then he dictated the terms which Dyck had asked, except those concerning the reforms he had made, which was not in his power to do, save for the present.

When the document had been signed by the admiral, Dyck read the contents aloud. It embodied nearly all he had asked.

'Now I ask permission for one more thing only, sir—for the new captain of the *Ariadne* to go with me to her, and there I will read this paper to the crew. I will give a copy of it to the new captain, whoever he may be.'

The admiral stood for a moment in thought. Then he said:

'Ivy, I transfer you to the *Ariadne*. It's better that some one who understands, as you do, should be in control after Calhoun has gone. Go with him now, and have your belongings sent to you. I appoint you temporary captain of the *Ariadne*, because I think no one could deal with the situation there so wisely. Ivy, every ship in the squadron must treat the *Ariadne* respectfully. Within two days, Mr. Calhoun, you shall be landed at Jamaica, there to await the Admiralty decree. I will say this : that as the sure victory of our fleet has come through you, you shall not suffer in my report. Fighting is not an easy trade, and to fight according to the rules is a very hard trade. Let me ask you to conduct yourself as a prisoner of war on parole.'

No Defence

Book III

Chapter XVI *A Letter*

WITH a deep sigh, the planter raised his head from the table where he was writing, and looked out upon the lands he had made his own. They lay on the Thomas River, a few hours' horseback travelling from Spanish Town, the capital, and they had the advantage of a plateau formation, with mountains in the far distance and ravines everywhere.

It was Christmas Day, and he had done his duty to his slaves and the folk on his plantation. He had given presents, had attended a seven o'clock breakfast of his people, had seen festivities of his negroes, and the feast given by his manager in Creole style to all who came—planting attorneys, buccras, overseers, bookkeepers, the subordinates of the local provost-marshal, small planters, and a few junior officers of the army and navy.

He had turned away with cynicism from the overladen table, with its shoulder of stewed wild boar in the centre; with its chocolate, coffee, tea, spruce-beer, cassava-cakes, pigeon-pies, tongues, round of beef, barbacued hog, fried conchs, black crab pepper-pod, mountain mullet, and acid fruits. It was so unlike what his past had known, so 'damnable luxurious!'

Now his eyes wandered over the space where were the grandilla, with its blossom like a passion-flower, the black Tahiti plum, with its bright pink tassel-blossom, and the fine mango trees, loaded half with fruit and half with bud. In the distance were the guinea cornfields of brownish hue, the cottonfields, the long ranges of negro houses like thatched cottages, the penguin hedges, with their beautiful red, blue, and white convolvuluses; the lime, logwood, and bread-fruit trees, the avocado-pear, the feathery bamboo, and the jack-fruit tree; and between the mountains and his own sugar-estates, negro settlements and pens. He heard the flight of parrots chattering, he watched the floating humming-bird, and at last he fixed his eyes upon the cabbage tree down in the garden, and he had an instant desire for it. It was a natural and human taste—the cabbage from the tree-top boiled for a simple yet sumptuous meal.

He liked simplicity. He did not, as so many did in Jamaica, drink claret or punch at breakfast soon after sunrise. In a land where all were *bon-vivants*, where the lowest tradesmen drank wine after dinner, and rum, brandy and water, or sangaree in the forenoon, a somewhat lightsome view of table-virtues might have been expected of the young unmarried planter. For such was he who, from the windows of his 'castle,' saw his domain shimmering in the sun of a hot December day.

It was Dyck Calhoun.

With an impatient air he took up the sheets that he had been reading. Christmas Day was on his nerves. The whole town of Kingston, with its twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants, had but one church. If he entered it, even to-day, he would have seen no more than a hundred and fifty to two hundred people; mostly mulattoes—'bronze ornaments'—and peasants in shag trousers, jackets of coarse blue cloth, and no waistcoats, with one or two magistrates, a dozen gentlemen or so, and probably twice that number of ladies. It was not an island given over to piety, or to religious habits.

Not that this troubled Dyck Calhoun; nor, indeed, was he shocked by the fact that nearly every unmarried white man in the island, and many married white men, had black mistresses and families born to the black women, and that the girls had no married future. They would become the temporary wives of white men, to whom they were on the whole faithful and devoted. It did not even vex him that a wretched mulatto might be whipped in the market-square for laying his hands upon a white man, and that if he was a negro-slave he could be shot for the same liberty.

It all belonged to the abnormal conditions of an island where black and white were in relations impossible in the countries from which the white man had come. It did not even startle Dyck that all the planters, and the people generally in the island, from the chief justice and custos rotulorum down to the deck-swabber, cultivated the amplitude of living.

But let Dyck tell his own story. The papers he held were sheets of a letter he was writing to one from whom he had heard nothing since the night he enlisted in the navy, and that was nearly three years before.

This was the letter:

'My dear Friend:

'You will see I address you as you have done me in the two letters I have had from you in the past. You will never read this letter, but I write it as if you would. For you must know I may never hope for personal intercourse with you. I was imprisoned for killing your father, Erris Boyne, and that separates us like an abyss. It matters little whether I killed him or not; the law says I did, and the law has taken its toll of me. I was in prison for four years, and when freed I enlisted in the king's navy, a quota man, with my servant-friend, Michael Clones. That was the beginning of painful and wonderful days for me. I was one of the mutineers of the Nore, and——'

Here followed a description of the days he had spent on the *Ariadne* and before, and of all that happened down to the time when he was arrested by the admiral in the West Indian Sea. He told how he was sent over to the *Ariadne* with Captain Ivy to read the admiral's letter to the seamen, and then, by consent of the admiral, to leave again with Michael Clones for Jamaica, where he was set ashore with twenty pounds in his pocket—and not on parole, by the admiral's command. Here the letter shall again take up the story, and be a narrative of Dyck Calhoun's life from that time until this Christmas Day.

'What to do was the question. I knew no one in Jamaica—no one at all except the governor, Lord Mallow, and him I had fought with swords in Phœnix Park five years before. I had not known he was governor here. I came to know it when I first saw him riding over the unpaved street into Kingston from Spanish Town with his suite, ornate with his governorship. He was a startling figure in scarlet, with huge epaulets on his lieutenant-general's uniform, as big a pot as ever boiled on any fire—chancellor, head of the government and of the army, master of the legislature, judging like one o'clock in the court of chancery, controller of the affairs of civil life, and maker of a policy of which he alone can judge who knows what interests clash in the West Indies.

'English, French, Spanish, and Dutch are all hereabout. All struggle for place above the other in the world of commerce and society, though chiefly it is the English *versus* the French in these days; and the policy of the governor is the policy of the country. He never knows whether there will be a French naval descent or whether the blacks in his own island will do as the blacks in St. Domingo did—massacre the white people in thousands. Or whether the free blacks, the Maroons, who got their freedom by treaty with Governor Trelawney, when the British commander changed hats with Cudjoe, the Maroon chief, as the sealing of the bargain—whether they will rise again, as they before have risen, and bring terror into the white settlement; and whether, in that case, all negro-slaves will join them, and Jamaica come to be a land of revolution.

'Of what good, then, will be the laws lately passed regulating the control of slaves, securing them rights never given before, even forbidding lashes beyond forty-nine! Of what use, then, the punishment of owners who have ill-used the slaves? The local councils who have power to punish never proceed against white men with rigour; and to preserve a fair balance between the white man up above and the black down below is the responsibility of the fair-minded governor. If, like Mallow, he is not fair-minded, then is the lash the heavier, and the governor has burdens greater than could easily be borne in lands where the climate is more friendly.

'Lord Mallow did not see me when I passed him in the street, but he soon came to know of me from the admiral and Captain Ivy, who told him all my story since I was freed from jail. Then he said I should be confined in a narrow space near to Kingston, and should have no freedom ; but the admiral had his way, and I was given freedom of the whole island till word should come from the Admiralty what should be done with me. To the governor's mind it was dangerous allowing me freedom, a man convicted of crime, who had suffered a term of imprisonment, had been a mutineer, had stolen one of his majesty's ships, and had fled to the Caribbean Sea. He thought I should well be at the bottom of the sea, where he would soon have put me, I make no doubt, if it had not been for the admiral, and Captain Ivy—you do not know him, I think—who played a good part to me, when men once close friends have deserted me.

'Well, we had, Michael and I, but twenty pounds between us; and if there was not plenty of free food in the island, God knows what would have become of us ! But there it was, fresh in every field, by every wayside, at every doorway. We could not starve, or die of thirst, or faint for lack of sleep, since every bush was a bed in spite of the garapatos or wood-ticks, the snore of the tree-toad; the hoarse shriek of the macaw, and the shrill gird of the guinea-fowl. Every bed was thus free, and there was land to be got for a song, enough to grow what would suffice for two men's daily wants. But we did not rest long upon the land—I have it still, land which cost me five pounds out of the twenty, and for the rest there was an old hut on the little place —five acres it was, and good land too, where you could grow anything at all. Heaven knows what we might have become in that tiny plantation, for I was sick of life, and the mosquitos and flying ants, and the chattering parroquets, the grim gallinazo, and the *quatre*, or native bed—a wooden frame and canvas; but one day at Kingston I met a man, one Cassandro Biatt, who had an obsession for adventure, and he came and spoke to me privately. He said he knew me from people's talk, and would I listen to him? What was there to do? He was a clean-cut rogue, if ever there was one, but a rogue of parts, as he proved; and I lent an ear.

'Now, what think you was his story? Well, but this—that off the coast of Haiti, there was a ship which had been sunk with every man on board, and with the ship was treasure without counting—jewels belonging once to a Spaniard of high place, who was taking them to Paris. His box had been kept in the captain's cabin, and it could be found, no doubt, and brought to the surface. Even if that were not possible, there was plenty of gold on the ship, and every piece of it was good money. There had been searching for the ship, but none had found it; but he, Cassandro Biatt, had sure knowledge, got from an obi-man, of the place where it lay. It would not be an expensive business, but, cheap as it was, he had no means of raising cash for the purpose; while I could, no doubt, raise the needed money if I set about it. That was how he put it to me. Would I do it? It was not with me a case of "no shots left in the locker, no copper to tinkle on a tombstone." I was not down to my last macaroni, or quarter-dollar; but I drank some sangaree and set about to do it. I got my courage from a look towards Rodney's statue in its temple—Rodney did a great work for Jamaica against Admiral de Grasse.

'Why should I tell Biatt the truth about myself? He knew it. Cassandro was an accomplished liar, and a man of merit of his kind. This obi-man's story I have never believed; yet how Biatt came to know where that treasure-ship was I do not know now.

'Yes, out we went through the harbour of Kingston, beyond the splendid defences of Port Royal and the men-of-war there, past the Palisadoes and Rock Fort, and away to the place of treasure-trove. We found it—that lost galleon; and we found the treasure-box of the captain's cabin. We found gold too; but the treasure-box was the chief thing; and we made it ours after many a hard day. Three months it was from the day Biatt first spoke to me to the day when, with an expert diver, we brought the box to the surface and opened it.

'How I induced one of the big men of Jamaica to be banker and skipper for us need not be told; but he is one of whom men have dark sayings—chiefly, I take it, because he does bold, incomprehensible things. That business paid him well, for when the rent of the ship was met, and the few men on it paid—slaves they were chiefly—he pocketed ten thousand pounds, while Biatt and I each pouched forty thousand, and Michael two thousand. Aye, to be sure, Michael was in it! He is in all I do, and is as good as men of ten times his birth and history. Michael will be a rich man one day. In two years his two thousand have grown to four, and he misses no chance.

'But those days when Biatt and I went treasure-ship hunting were not without their trials. If we had failed, then no more could this land have been home or resting-place for us. We should only have been sojourners with no name, in debt, in disgrace, a pair of braggart adventurers, who had worked a master-man of the island for a ship, and money and men, and had lost all except the ship! Though to be sure, the money was not a big thing—a few hundred pounds; but the ship was no flea-bite. It was a biggish thing, for it could be rented to carry sugar—it was, in truth, a sugar-ship of four hundred tons—but it never carried so big a cargo of sugar as it did on the day when that treasure-box was brought to the surface of the sea.

'I'm bound to say this—one of the straightest men I ever met, liar withal, was Cassandro Biatt. He took his jewels and vanished up the seas in a flourish He would not even have another try at the gold in the bowels of the ship.

'"I've got plenty to fill my paunch, and I'll go while I've enough. It's the men that don't go in time that get left in the end"—that's what he said.

'And he was right; for other men went after the gold and got some of it, and were caught by French and South American pirates and lost all they had gained. Still another group went and brought away ten thousand pounds, and lost it in fighting with Spanish buccaneers. So Biatt was right, and went away content, while I stayed here—because I must—and bought the land and house where I have my great sugar-plantation. It is an enterprise of volume, but it is not beyond my capacity, and all would be well if I were normal in mind and body; but I am not. I have a past that stinks to heaven, as Shakespeare says, and I am an outlaw of the one land which has all my soul and name and heritage. Yes, that is what they have done to me—made a convict, an outlaw of me. I may live—but not in the British Isles; and if any man kills me, he is not liable to the law.

'Men do not treat me badly here, for I have property and money, and this is a land where these two things mean more than anywhere else, even more than in a republic like that where you live. Here men live according to the law of the knife, fork, and bottle, yet nowhere in the world is there deeper national morality or wider faith or endurance. It is a land where the sea is master, where naval might is the chief factor, and weighs down all else.

'Here the navies of the great powers meet and settle their disputes, and every being in the island knows that life is only worth what a hundred-ton brig-of-war permits. I have seen here in Jamaica the offscourings of the French and Spanish fleets on parole; have seen them entering King's House like loyal citizens; have even known of French prisoners being used as guards at the entrance of King's House, and I have informed the chief justice of dismal facts which ought to have moved him. But what can you expect of a chief justice who need not be a lawyer, as this one is not, and has other means of earning income which, though not disloyal, are lowering to the status of a chief justice? And not the chief justice alone. I have seen French officers entertained at Government House who were guilty of shocking inhumanities and cruelties. The governor, Lord Mallow, is much to blame. On him lies the responsibility; to him must go the discredit. For myself, I feel his enmity on every hand. I suffer from his suggestive opposition; I am the victim of his dark moods.

'If I want a concession from a local council, his hand is at work against me; if I see him in the street, I get a courtesy tossed, as you would toss a bone to a dog. If I appear at the king's ball, which is open to all on the island who are respectable, I am treated with such disdain by the viceroy of the king that all the island is agog. I went one day to the king's ball the same as the rest of the world, and I went purposely in dress contrary to the regulations. Here was the announcement of the affair in the *Royal Gazette*, which was reproduced in the *Chronicle*, the one important newspaper in the island:

KING'S HOUSE,
October 27th, 1797.

KING'S BALL.

There will be a Ball given by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, on Tuesday evening, the 6th day of December next, in honour of

HIS MAJESTY'S BIRTHDAY;

To prevent confusion, Ladies and Gentlemen are requested to order their carriages to come by the Old Court House, and go off by the Long Room.

N.B.—*No gentlemen can possibly be admitted in boots, or otherwise improperly dressed.*

'Well, in a spirit of mutiny—in which I am, in a sense, an expert—I went in boots and otherwise "improperly dressed," for I wore my hair in a queue, like a peasant. What is more, I danced with a negress in the great quadrille, and thereby offended the governor and his lady aunt, who presides at his palace. It matters naught to me. On my own estate it was popular enough, and that meant more to me than this good-will of Lord Mallow.

'He does not spare me in his recitals to his friends, who carry his speech abroad. His rancour against me is the greater, I know, because of the wealth I got in the treasure-ship, to prevent which he tried to prohibit my leaving the island, through the withholding of a leave-ticket to me. His argument to the local authorities was that I had no rights, that I am a murderer and a mutineer, and confined to the island, though not on parole. He almost succeeded; but the man to whom I went, the big rich man intervened, successfully—how I know not—and I was let go with my permit-ticket.

'What big things hang on small issues! If my Lord Mallow had prevented me leaving the island, I shouldn't now own a great plantation and three hundred negroes. I shouldn't be able to pay my creditors in good gold Portuguese half-johannes and Spanish doubloons, and be free of Spanish silver, and give no heed to the existence of the bitt, which, as you perhaps know, is equal to fivepence in British money, such as you and I used to spend when you were Queen of Ireland and I was your slave.

'Then I worshipped you as few women have been worshipped in all the days of the world—oh, cursed spite of life and time that I should have been jailed for killing your bad father! Aye, he was a bad man, and he is better in his grave than out of it, but it puts a gulf between you and me which nothing will ever bridge—unless it should some day be known I did not kill him, and then, no doubt, it will be too late.

'On my soul, I don't believe I put my sword into him; but if I did, he well deserved it, for he was worse than faithless to your mother, he was faithless to his country—he was a traitor! I did not tell that story of his treachery in court—I did not tell it because of you. You did not deserve such infamy, and the truth came not out at the trial. I, in my view, dared not, lest it might injure you, and you had suffered enough—nay, more than enough—through him.

'I wonder how you are, and if you have changed—

I mean in appearance. I am sure you are not married ; I should have felt it in my bones, if you were. No, no, my sweet lass, you are not married. But think—it is more than seven long years since we met on the hills above Playmore, and you put your hand in mine and said we should be friends for all time. It is near three years since a letter came to me from you, and in the time I have made progress.

'I did not go to the United States, as you asked me to do. Is it not plain I could not ? My only course was to avoid you. You see, your mother knows the truth—knows that I was jailed for killing your father and her divorced husband. Therefore, the only way to do was as I did. I could not go where you were. There should be hid from you the fact that Erris Boyne was a traitor. This is your right, in my mind. Looking back, I feel sure I could have escaped jail if I had told what I knew of Erris Boyne ; and perhaps would have been better, for I should, no doubt have been acquitted. Yet I could not have gone to you, for I am not sure I did not kill him.

'So it is best as it is. We are as we are, and nothing can make all different for us. I am a dissolute planter of Jamaica who has snatched from destiny a living and some riches. I have a bad name in the world. Yet by saving the king's navy from defeat out here I did a good turn for my country and the empire.

'So much to the good. It brought me freedom from the rope and pardon for my chief offence. Then, in company with a rogue, I got wealth from the depths of the sea, and here I am in the bottom of my luxury, drunken and obscene—yes, obscene, for I permit my overseers and my manager to keep black women and have children by them. That

I do not do so myself is no virtue on my part, but the virtue of a girl whom I knew in Connemara. I fill myself with drink. I have a bottle of madeira or port every night, and pints of beer or claret. I am a creature of low habits, a man sodden with self-indulgence. And when I am in drink, no slaver can be more cruel and ruthless.

'Yet I am moderate in eating. The meals that people devour here almost revolt me. They eat like cormorants and drink like dry ground; but at my table I am careful, save with the bottle. This is a land of wonderful fruits, and I eat in quantities pineapple, tamarind, papaw, guava, sweet-sop, star-apple, granadilla, hog-plum, Spanish-gooseberry, and pindal-nut. These are native, but there are also the orange, lemon, lime, shaddock, melon, fig, pomegranate, cinnamon, and mango, brought chiefly from the Spanish lands of South America. The fruit-market here is good, Heaven knows, and I have my run of it. Perhaps that is why my drink does not fatten me greatly. Yes, I am thin—thinner even than when you saw me last. How wonderful a day it was! You remember it, I'm sure.

'We stood on the high hills, you and I, looking to the west. It was a true Irish day. A little in front of us, in the sky, were great clusters of clouds, and beyond them, as far as eye could see, were hills so delicately green, so spotted with settlements, so misty and full of glamour, and so cheerful with the western light. And the storm broke—do you remember it? It broke, but not on us. It fell on the middle of the prospect before us, and we saw beyond it the bright area of sunny country where men work and prophesy and slave, and pray to the ancient gods and acclaim the saints, and die and fructify the mould;

where such as Christopher Dogan live, and men a thousand times lower than he. Christopher came to the jail the day I was released—with Michael Clones he came. He read me my bill of life's health—what was to become of me—the black and the white of it, the good and the bad, the fair and the foul. Even the good fortune of the treasure from the sea he foresaw, and much else that has not come to me, and, as I think, will never come; for it is too full a cup for me so little worthy of it.

'It seems strange to me that I am as near to the United States here in Jamaica, or almost as near, as one in London is to one in Dublin; and yet one might as well be ten thousand leagues distant for all it means to her one loves in the United States. Yes, dear Sheila, I love you, and I would tear out the heart of the world for you. I bathe my whole being in your beauty and your charm. I hunger for you—to stand beside you, to listen to your voice, to dip my prison fingers into the pure cauldron of your soul and feel my own soul expand. I wonder why it is that to-day I feel more than I ever felt before the rare splendour of your person.

'I have always admired you and loved you, always heard you calling me, as if from some sacred corner of a perfect world. Is it that yesterday's dissipation—yes, I was drunk yesternight, drunk in a new way. I was drunk with the thought of you, the longing for you. I picked a big handful of roses, and in my mind gave them into your hands. And I thought you smiled and said:

'"Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter Paradise."

'So I followed you to your home there in the Virginian country. It was a dream, all except the roses, and those

I laid in front of the box where I keep your letters and a sketch I made of you when we were young and glad—when *I* was young and glad. For I am an old man, Sheila, in all that makes men old. My step is quick still, my eye is sharp, and my brain beats fast, but my heart is ancient. I am an ancient of days, without hope or pleasure, save what pleasure comes in thinking of one whom I worship, yet must ever worship from afar.

'I wonder why I seem to feel you very near to-day! Perhaps it's because 'tis Christmas Day. I am not a religious man, but Christmas is a day of memories.

'Is it because of the past in Ireland? Am I only—God, am I only to be what I am for the rest of my days, a planter denied the pleasure of home by his own acts! Am I only a helpless fragment of a world of lost things?

'I have no friends—but yes, I have. I have Michael Clones and Captain Ivy, though he's far away—aye, he's a friend of friends, is Captain Ivy. These naval folk have had so much of the world, have got the bearings of so many seas, that they lose all littleness, and form their own minds. They are not like the people who knew me in Ireland—the governor here is one of them—and who believe the worst of me. The governor—faugh, he was made for bigger and better things! He is one of the best swordsmen in the world, and he is out against me here as if I was a man of importance, and not a commonplace planter on an obscure river. I have no social home life, and yet I live in what is called a castle. A Jamaica castle has none of the marks of antiquity, chivalry, and distinction which castles that you and I know in the old land possess.

'What is my castle like? Well, it is a squarish building, of bungalow type, set on a hill. It has stories and an attic, with a jutting dormer-window in the front of the roof; and above the lowest story there is a great verandah, on which the living-rooms and bedrooms open. It is commodious, and yet from a broad standpoint it is without style or distinction. It has none of those Corinthian pillars which your homesteads in America have. Yet there is in it a simple elegance. It has no carpets, but a shining mahogany floor, for there are few carpets in this land of heat. It is a place where music and mirth and family voices would be fitting; but there are no family voices here, save such as speak with a negro lisp and oracularly.

'I can hear music at this moment, and inside my castle. It comes from the irrepressible throats of my cook and my housemaid, who have more joy in the language of the plantation than you could have in the songs of St. Angelus. The only person in this castle out of spirits is its owner.

'My castle is embowered in a loose grove of palms and acacias, pimento shrubs, splendid star-apples, and bully-trees, with wild lemon, mahogany, dogwood, Jerusalem-thorn, and the waving plumes of bamboo canes. There is nothing British in it—nothing at all. It stands on brick pillars, is reached by a stair of marble slabs, and has a great piazza on the front. You enter a fine, big hall, dark—you will understand that, though it is not so hot in Virginia, for the darkness makes for coolness. From the hall the bedrooms open all round. We are not so barbaric here as you might think, for my dining-room, which lies beyond the hall, with jalousies or movable blinds, exposed to all the winds, is comfortable, even ornate. There you shall see wax-lights on the table, and finger-glasses with green leaves, and fine linen and napkins, and plenty of silver—even silver wine-coolers, and beakers of fame and beauty, and flowers, flowers everywhere, and fruit of exquisite charm. I have to live in outward seeming as do my neighbours, even to keeping a black footman, gorgeously dressed, with bare legs.

'Here at my window grows a wild aloe, and it is in flower. Once only in fifty years does this aloe flower, and I pick its sweet verdure now and offer it to you. There it lies, beside this letter that I am writing. It is typical of myself, for only once has my heart flowered, and it will be only once in fifty years. The perfume of the flower is like an everlasting bud from the last tree of Time. See, my Sheila, your drunken, reckless lover pulls this sweet offering from his garden and offers it to you. He has no virtues; and yet he would have been a thousand times worse, if you had not come into his life. He had in him the seeds of trouble, the sproutings of shame, for even in the first days of his love there in Dublin he would not restrain himself. He drank, he played cards, he fought and went with bad company—not women, never that; but he kept the company of those through whom he came at last to punishment for manslaughter.

'Yet, without you, who can tell what he might have been? He might have fallen so low that not the wealth of ten thousand treasure-boxes could give him even the appearance of honesty. And now he offers you what you cannot accept—can never accept—a love as deep as the life from which he came; a love that would throttle the world for you, that would force the doors of hell to bring you what you want.

'What do you want? I know not. Perhaps you have inherited the vast property to which you were the heir. If you have, what can you want that you have not means to procure? Ah, I have learned one thing, my friend—one can get nearly everything with money. It is the hidden machinery which makes the world of success go round. With brains, you say? Yes, money and brains, but without the money brains seldom win alone. Do not I know? When I was in prison, with estate vanished and home gone and my father in his grave, who was concerned about me?

'Only the humblest of all God's Irish people; but with them I have somehow managed to win back lost ground. I am a stronger man than I was in all that men count of value in the world. I have an estate where I work like any youth who has everything before him. I have nothing before me, yet I shall go on working to the end. Why? Because I have some faculties which are more than bread and butter, and I must give them opportunity.

"Yet I am not always sane. Sometimes I feel I could march out and sweep into the sea one of the towns that dot the coast of this island. I have the bloody thirst, as said the great Spanish conquistador. I would like—yes, sometimes I would like to sweep to a watery grave one of the towns that are a glory to this island, as Savanna la Mar was swept to oblivion in the year 1780 by a hurricane. You can still see the ruins of the town at the bottom of the sea—I have sailed over it in what is now the harbour, and there beneath, on the deep sands, lost to time and trouble, is the slain and tortured town of Savanna la Mar. Was the Master of the World angry that day when, with a besom of wind and a tidal wave, He swept the place into the sea? Or was it some devil's work while the Lord of All slept? As the Spanish say, *Quien sabe?*

'Then there was that other enormous incident which made a man to be swallowed by an earthquake, then belched out again into the sea and picked up and restored to life again, and to live for many years. Indeed, yes, it is so. His tombstone may be seen even at this day at Green Bay, Kingston. His name was Lewis Galdy, and he is held in high repute in this land.

'I feel sometimes as Beelzebub may feel, and I long to do what Beelzebub might do as part of his mission. Sometimes a madness of revolt comes over me, and I long to ravage all the places I see, all the people I know—or nearly all. Why I do not have negroes thrashed and mutilated, as some do, I know not. Over against the southern shore in the parish of St. Elizabeth is an estate called Salem, owned, it is said, by an American, where the manager does such things. I am told that savageries are performed there.

'There are too many absentee owners of land in this island, and the wrongs done by agents who have no personal honour at stake are all too plentiful. If I could, I would have no slavery, would set all the blacks free, making full compensation to the owners, and less to the absentee owners.

'I look out on a world of summer beauty and of heat. I see the sheep in hundreds on the far hills of pasturage—sheep with short hair, small and sweet as any that ever came from the South Downs. I see the natives in their Madras handkerchiefs. I see upon the road some planter in his ketureen—a sort of sedan chair; I see a negro funeral, with its strange ceremony and its gumbies of African drums. I see yam-fed planters, on their horses, making for the burning, sandy streets of the capital. I see the Scots grass growing five and six feet high, food unsurpassed for horses—all the foliage too—beautiful tropical trees and shrubs, and here and there a huge breeding-farm. Yet I know that out beyond my sight there is the region known as Trelawney, and Trelawney Town, the headquarters of the Maroons, the free negroes—they who fled after the Spanish had been conquered and the British came, and who were later freed and secured by the Trelawney Treaty. I know that now they are ready to rise, that they are working among the slaves; and if they rise the danger is great to the white population of the island, who are outnumbered ten to one.

'The governor has been warned, but he gives no heed, or treats it all lightly, pointing out how few the Maroons are. He forgets that a few determined men can demoralize a whole state, can fight and murder and fly to dark coverts in the tropical woods, where they cannot be tracked down and destroyed; and, if they have made supporters of the slaves, what consequences may not follow!

'What do the Maroons look like? They are ferocious and isolated, they are proud and overbearing, they are horribly cruel, but they are potent, and are difficult to reach. They are not small and meagre, but are big, brawny fellows, clothed in wide duck trousers and shirts, and they are well armed—cutlass, powder-horn, haversack, sling, shot-gun, and pouch for ball. They dress as the country requires, and they are strong fighters against our soldiers who are burdened with heavy muskets, and who defy the climate, with their stuffed coats, their weighty caps, and their tight cross-belts. The Maroons are not to be despised. They have brains, the insolence of freedom among natives who are not free, and vast cruelty. They can be mastered and kept in subjection, can be made allies, if properly handled; but Lord Mallow goes the wrong way about it all. He permits things that inflame the Maroons.

'One thing is clear to me—only by hounds can these people be defeated. So sure am I upon this point, that I have sent to Cuba for sixty hounds, with which, when the trouble comes—and it is not far off—we shall be able to hunt the Maroons with the only weapon they really fear—the dog's sharp tooth. It may be the governor may intervene on the arrival of the dogs; but I have made friends with the provost-marshal-general and some members of the Jamaica legislature; also I have a friend in the deputy of the provost-marshal-general in my parish of Clarendon here, and I will make a good bet that the dogs will be let come into the island, governor or no governor.

'When one sets one's self against the Crown one must be sure of one's ground, and fear no foe, however great and high. Well, I have won so far, and I shall win in the end. Mallow should have some respect for one that beat him at Phœnix Park with the sword; that beat him when he would have me imprisoned here; that beat him in the matter of the ship for Haiti, and that will beat him on every hazard he sets, unless he stoops to underhand acts, which he will not do. That much must be said for him. He plays his part in no small way, and he is more a bigot and a fanatic loyalist than a rogue. Suppose—but no, I will not suppose. I will lay my plans, I will keep faith with people here who trust me, and who know that if I am stern I am also just, and I will play according to the rules made by better men than myself.

'But what is this I see? Michael Clones—in his white jean waistcoat, white neckcloth and trousers, and blue coat—is coming up the drive in hot haste, bearing a letter. He rides too hard. He has never carried himself easily in this climate. He treats it as if it was Ireland. He will not protect himself, and, if penalty followed folly, should now be in his grave. I like you, Michael. You are a boon, but——'

Chapter XVII *Strangers Arrive*

DYCK CALHOUN'S letter was never ended. It was only a relic of the years spent in Jamaica, only a sign of his well-being, though it gave no real picture of himself. He did not know how like a tyrant he had become in some small ways, while in the large things he remained generous, urbane, and resourceful. He was in appearance thin, dark-favoured, buoyant in manner, and stern of face, with splendid eyes. Had he dwelt on Olympus, he might have been summoned to judge and chastise the sons of men.

When Michael Clones came to the doorway, Dyck laid down his quill-pen and eyed the flushed servant in disapproval.

'What is it, Michael? Wherefore this starkness? Is some one come from heaven?'

'Not precisely from heaven, y'r honour, but——'

'But—yes, Michael! Have done with but-ing, and come to the real matter.'

'Well, sir, they've come from Virginia.'

Dyck Calhoun slowly got to his feet, his face paling, his body stiffening. From Virginia! Who should be come from Virginia, save she to whom he had just been writing?

'Who has come from Virginia?'

He knew, but he wanted it said.

'Sure, you knew a vessel came from America last night. Well, in her was one that was called the Queen of Ireland long ago.'

'Queen of Ireland—well, what then ?' Dyck's voice was tuneless, his manner rigid, his eyes burning.

'Well, she—Miss Sheila Llyn and her mother are going to the Salem Plantation, down by the Essex Valley Mountain. It is her plantation now. It belonged to her uncle, Bryan Llyn. He got it in payment of a debt. He's dead now, and all his lands and wealth have come to her. Her mother, Mrs. Llyn, is with her, and they start to-morrow or the next day for Salem. There'll be different doings at Salem henceforward, y'r honour. She's not the woman to see slaves treated as the manager at Salem treated 'em.'

Dyck Calhoun made an impatient gesture at this last remark.

'Yes, yes, Michael. Where are they now ?'

'They're at Charlotte Bedford's lodgings in Spanish Town. The governor waited on them this morning. The governor sent them flowers and——'

'Flowers—Lord Mallow sent them flowers ! Hell's fiend, man, suppose he did ?'

'There are better flowers here than in any Spanish Town.'

'Well, take them, Michael; but if you do, come here again no more while you live, for I'll have none of you. Do you think I'm entering the lists against the king's governor ?'

'You've done it before, sir, and there's no harm in doing it again. One good turn deserves another. I've also to tell you, sir, that Lord Mallow has asked them to stay at King's House.'

'Lord Mallow has asked Americans to stay at King's House !'

'But they're Irish, and he knew them in Ireland, y'r honour.'

'Well, he knew me in Ireland, and I'm proscribed!'

'Ah, that's different, as you know. There's no war on now, and they're only good American citizens who own land in this dominion of the king; so why shouldn't he give them courtesy?'

'From whom do you get your information?' asked Dyck Calhoun with an air of suspicion.

'From Darius Boland, y'r honour,' answered Michael, with a smile. 'Who is Darius Boland, you're askin' in y'r mind? Well, he's the new manager come from the Llyn plantations in Virginia; and right good stuff he is, with a tongue that's as dry as cut-wheat in August. And there's humour in him, plenty—aye, plenty. When did I see him, and how? Well, I saw him this mornin', on the quay at Kingston. He was orderin' the porters about with an air—oh, bedad, an air! I saw the name upon the parcels—Miss Sheila Llyn, of Moira, Virginia, and so I spoke to him. The rest was aisy. He looked me up and down in a flash, like a searchlight playin' on an enemy ship, and then he smiled. "Well," said he, "who might you be? For there's queer folks in Jamaica, I'm told." So I said I was Michael Clones, and at that he doffed his hat and held out a hand. "Well, here's luck," said he. "Luck at the very start! I've heard of you from my mistress. You're servant to Mr. Dyck Calhoun—ain't that it?" And I nodded, and he smiled again—a smile that'd cost money annywhere else than in Jamaica. He smiled again, and give a slow hitch to his breeches as though they was fallin' down. Why, sir, he's the longest bit of man you ever saw, with a pointed beard, and a nose that's as long as a midshipman's tongue—dry, lean and elastic. He's quick and slow all at once. His small eyes twinkle like stars beatin' up against bad weather, and his skin's the colour of Scots grass in the dead of summer—*yaller*, he'd call it if he called it anything, and yaller was what he called the look of the sky above the hills. Queer way of talk he has, that man, as queer as——'

'I understand, Michael. But what else? How did you come to talk about the affairs of Mrs. and Miss Llyn? He didn't just spit it out, did he?'

'Sure, not so quick and free as spittin', y'r honour; but when he'd sorted me out, as it were, he said Miss Llyn had come out here to take charge of Salem; her own estate in Virginia bein' in such good runnin' order, and her mind bein' active. Word had come of the trouble with the manager here, and one of the provost-marshal's deputies had written accounts of the flogging and ill-treatment of slaves, and that's why she come—to put things right at Salem!'

'To put things wrong in Jamaica, Michael, that's why she's come. To loose the ball of confusion and free the flood of tragedy—that's why she's come! Man, Michael, you know her history—who she was and what happened to her father. Well, do you think there's no tragedy in her coming here? I killed her father, they say, Michael. I was punished for it. I came here to be free of all those things—lifted out and away from them all. I longed to forget the past, which is only shame and torture; and here it is all spread out at my door again like a mat, which I must see as I go in and out. Essex Valley—why, it's less than a day's ride from here, far less than a day's ride! It can be ridden in four or five hours at a trot. Michael, it's all a damnable business. And here she is in Jamaica with her Darius Boland! There was no talk on Boland's part of their coming here, was there, Michael ?'

'None at all, sir, but there was that in the man's eye, and that in his tone, which made me sure he thought Miss Llyn and you would meet.'

'That would be strange, wouldn't it, in this immense continent !' Dyck remarked cynically. 'She knew I was here before she came ?'

'Aye, she knew. She had seen your name in the papers—English and Jamaican. She knew you had regained your life and place, and was a man of mark here.'

'A marked man, you mean, Michael—a man whom the king has had to pardon of a crime because of an act done that served the State. I am forbidden to return to the British Isles or to the land of my birth, forbidden free traffic as a citizen, hammered out of recognition by the strokes of enmity. A man of mark, indeed ! Aye, with the broad arrow on me, with the shame of prison and mutiny on my name !'

'But if she don't believe ?'

'If she don't believe ! Well, she must be told the truth at last. I wonder her mother let her come here. Her mother knew part of the truth. She hid it all from the girl—and now they are here ! I must see it through, but it's a wretched fate, Michael.'

'Perhaps her mother didn't know you were here, sir.'

Dyck laughed grimly.

'Michael, you've a lawyer's mind. Perhaps you're right. The girl may have hid from her mother all newspapers referring to me. That may well be ; but it's not the way that will bring—understanding.'

'I think it's the truth, sir, for Darius Boland spoke naught of the mother—indeed, he said only what would make me think the girl came with her own ends in view. Faith, I'm sure the mother did not know.

'She will know now. Your Darius Boland will tell her.'

'By St. Peter, it doesn't matter who tells her, sir. The business must be faced.'

'Michael, order my horse, and I will go to Spanish Town. This matter must be brought to a head. The truth must be told. Order my horse!'

'It is the very heat of the day, sir.'

'Then at five o'clock, after dinner, have my horse here.'

'Am I to ride with you, sir?'

Dyck nodded.

'Yes, Michael. There's only one thing to do—face all the facts with all the evidence, and you are fact and evidence too. You know more of the truth than any one else.'

Several hours later, when the sun was abating its force a little, after travelling the burning roads through yams and cocoa, grenadillas and all kinds of herbs and roots and vagrant trees, Dyck Calhoun and Michael Clones came into Spanish Town. Dyck rode the unpaved streets on his horse with its high demipicque Spanish saddle, with its silver stirrups and heavy bit, and made his way towards Charlotte Bedford's lodgings.

Dyck looked round upon the town with new eyes. He saw it like one for the first time visiting it. He saw the people passing through the wide verandahs of the houses, like a vast colonnade, down the street, to be happily sheltered from the fierce sun. As he had come down from the hills he thought he had never seen the houses look more beautiful in their gardens of wild tamarinds, kennips, cocoa-nuts, pimentos, and palms, backed by negro huts. He had seen all sorts of people at the draw-wells of the houses—British, Spanish, French, South American, Creoles, and here and there a Maroon, and the everlasting negro who sang as he worked:

'Come along o' me, my buccra brave,
You see de shild de Lord he gave;
You drink de sangaree,
I make de frichasse——'

Here a face peeped out from the glazed sash of the jalousies of the balconies above—a face that could never be said to be white, though it had only a tinge of black in its coaxing beauty. There a workman with long hair and shag trousers painted the prevailing two-storied house the prevailing colour, white and green. There was a young naval officer in full dress, gold-buckled shoes, white trousers, short jacket with gold swab on shoulders, dress-sword and smart gait making for supper at King's House.

A long-legged 'son of a gun' of a Yankee had a 'clapper-claw,' or handshake, with a planting attorney in a kind of four-posted gig, canopied in leather and curtained clumsily. The Yankee laughed at the heavy straight shafts and the mule that drew the *volante*, as the gig was called, and the vehicle creaked and cried as it rolled along over the road, which was like a dry river-bed. There a French officer in Hessian boots, white trousers, blue uniform, and much-embroidered scarlet cuffs watched with amusement a slave carrying a goglet, or earthen jar, upon his head like an Egyptian, untouched by the hand, so adding dignity to carriage. He was holding a 'round-aboutation' with an old hag who was telling his fortune.

As they passed King's House, they saw troops of the viceroy's guests issuing from the palace—officers of the king's navy and army, officers and men of the Jamaica militia, pale-faced, big-eyed men of the creole class, mulattoes, quadroons and octoroons, Samboes with their wives in loose skirts, white stockings, and pinnacle hats. There also passed, in the streets, black servants with tin cases on their heads, or carrying parcels in their arms, and here and there processions of servants, each with something that belonged to their mistresses, who would presently be attending the king's ball.

Snatches of song were heard, and voices of men who had had a full meal and had 'taken observations'—as looking through the bottom of a glass of liquor was called by people with naval spirit—were mixed in careless carousal.

All this jarred on Dyck Calhoun and gave revolt to his senses. Yet he was only half-conscious of the great sensuousness of the scene as he passed through it. Now and then some one doffed a hat to him, and very occasionally some half-drunken citizen tossed at him a remark meant to wound; but he took no notice, and was content to let things pleasant and provocative pass down the long ranges of indifference.

All was brought to focus at last, however, by their arrival at Charlotte Bedford's lodgings, which, like most houses in the town, had a lookout or belfry fitted with green blinds and a telescope, and had a green-painted wooden railing round it.

At the very entrance, inside the gate, in the garden, they saw Sheila Llyn, her mother, and Darius Boland, who seemed to be enduring from the mother some sharp reprimand, to the amusement of the daughter.

As the gate closed behind Dyck and Michael, the three from Virginia turned round and faced them. As Dyck came forward, Sheila flushed and trembled. She was no longer a young girl, but her slim straightness, and the soft lines of her figure, gave her a dignity and charm which made her young womanhood distinguished—for she was now twenty-five, and had a carriage of which a princess might have been proud. Yet it was plain that the entrance of Dyck at this moment was disturbing. It was not what she had foreseen.

She showed no hesitation, however, but came forward to meet her visitor, while Michael fell back, as also did Darius Boland. Both these seemed to realize that the less they saw and heard the better ; and they presently got together in another part of the garden, as Dyck Calhoun came near enough almost to touch Sheila.

Surely, he thought, she was supreme in appearance and design. She was like some rare flower of the field, alert, gentle, strong, intrepid, with buoyant face, brown hair, blue eyes and cream-like skin. She was touched by a rose on each cheek and made womanly by firm and yet generous breasts, tenderly imprisoned by the white chiffon of her blouse in which was one bright sprig of the buds of a cherry-tree—a touch of modest luxuriance on a person sparsely ornamented. It was not tropical, this picture of Sheila Llyn ; it was a flick of northern life in a summer sky. It was at once cheerful and apart. It had no August in it ; no oil and wine. It was the little twig that grew by a running spring. It was fresh, dominant and serene. It was Connemara on the Amazon ! It was Sheila herself, whom time had enriched with far more than years and experience. It was a personality which would anywhere have taken place and held it. It was undefeatable, persistent and permanent ; it was the spirit of Ireland loose in a world that was as far apart from Ireland as she was from her dead, dishonoured father.

And Dyck? At first she felt she must fly to him—yes, in spite of the fact that he had suffered prison for manslaughter. But a nearer look at him stopped the impulse at its birth. Here was the Dyck Calhoun she had known in days gone by, but not the Dyck she had looked to see; for this man was like one who had come from a hanging, who had seen his dearest swinging at the end of a rope. His face was set in coldness; his hair was streaked with grey; his forehead had a line in the middle; his manner was rigid, almost frigid, indeed. Only in his eyes was there that which denied all that his face and manner said—a hungry, absorbing, hopeless look, the look of one who searches for a friend in the denying desert.

Somehow, when he bowed low to her, and looked her in the eyes as no one in all her life had ever done, she had an almost agonized understanding of what a man feels who has been imprisoned—that is, never the same again. He was an ex-convict, and yet she did not feel repelled by him. She did not believe he had killed Erris Boyne. As for the later crime of mutiny, that did not concern her much. She was Irish; but, more than that, she was in sympathy with the mutineers. She understood why Dyck Calhoun, enlisting as a common sailor, should take up their cause and run risk to advance it. That he had advanced it was known to all the world; that he had paid the price of his mutiny by saving the king's navy with a stolen ship had brought him pardon for his theft of a ship and mutiny; and that he had won wealth was but another proof of the man's power.

'You would not come to America, so I came here, and——' She paused, her voice trembling slightly.

'There is much to do at Salem,' he added calmly, and yet with his heart beating, as it had not beaten since the day he had first met her at Playmore.

'You would not take the money I sent to Dublin for you—the gift of a believing friend, and you would not come to America!'

'I shall have to tell you why one day,' he answered slowly, 'but I'll pay my respects to your mother now.'

So saying he went forward and bowed low to Mrs. Llyn. Unlike her daughter, Mrs. Llyn did not offer her hand. She was pale, distraught, troubled—and vexed. She, however, murmured his name and bowed.

'You did not expect to see me here in Jamaica,' he said boldly.

'Frankly, I did not, Mr. Calhoun,' she said.

'You resent my coming here to see you? You think it bold, at least.'

She looked at him closely and firmly. 'You *know* why I cannot welcome you.'

'Yet I have paid the account demanded by the law. And you had no regard for him. You divorced him.'

Sheila had drawn near, and Dyck made a gesture in her direction. 'She does not know,' he said, 'and she should not hear what we say now?'

Mrs. Llyn nodded, and in a low tone told Sheila that she wished to be alone with Dyck for a little while. In Dyck's eyes, as he watched Sheila go, was a thing deeper than he had ever known or shown before. In her white gown, and with her light step, Sheila seemed to float away—a picture graceful, stately, buoyant, 'keen and small.' As she was about to pass beyond a clump of pimento bushes, she turned her head towards the two, and there was that in her eyes which few ever see and seeing are afterwards the same. It was a look of inquiry, or revelation, of emotion which went to Dyck's heart.

'No, she does not know the truth,' Mrs. Llyn said. 'But it has been hard hiding it from her. One never knew whether some chance remark, some allusion in the papers, would tell her you had killed her father.'

'Did I kill her father?' asked Dyck helplessly. 'Did I? I was found guilty of it, but on my honour, Mrs. Llyn, I do not know, and I do not think I did. I have no memory of it. We quarrelled. I drew my sword on him, then he made an explanation and I madly, stupidly drank drugged wine in reconciliation with him, and then I remember nothing more—nothing at all.'

'What was the cause of your quarrel?'

Dyck looked at her long before answering. 'I hid that from my father even, and hid it from the world—did not even mention it in court at the trial. If I had, perhaps I should not have gone to jail. If I had, perhaps I should not be here in Jamaica. If I had——'

He paused, a flood of reflection drowning his face, making his eyes shine with black sorrow.

'Well, if you had! . . . Why did you not? Wasn't it your duty to save yourself and save your friends, if you could. Wasn't that your plain duty?'

'Yes, and that was why I did not tell what the quarrel was. If I had, even had I killed Erris Boyne, the jury would not have convicted me. Of that I am sure. It was a loyalist jury.'

'Then why did you not?'

'Isn't it strange that now after all these years, when I have settled the account with judge and jury, with state and law—that now I feel I must tell you the truth. Madam, your ex-husband, Erris Boyne, was a traitor. He was an officer in the French army, and he offered to make me an officer also and pay me well in French Government money, if I would break my allegiance and serve the French cause—Ah, don't start! He knew I was on my last legs financially. He knew I had acquaintance with young rebel leaders like Emmet, and he felt I could be won. So he made his proposal. Because of your daughter I held my peace, for she could bear it less than you. I did not tell the cause of the quarrel. If I had, there would have been for her the double shame. That was why I held my peace—a fool, but so it was!'

The woman seemed almost robbed of understanding. His story overwhelmed her. Yet what the man had done was so quixotic, so Celtic, that her senses were almost paralysed.

'So mad—so mad and bad and wild you were,' she said. 'Could you not see it was your duty to tell all, no matter what the consequences. The man was a villain. But what madness you were guilty of, what cruel madness! Only you could have done a thing like that. Erris Boyne deserved death—I care not who killed him—you or another. He deserved death, and it was right he should die. But that you should kill him, apart from all else—why indeed, oh indeed, it is a tragedy, for you loved my daughter, and the killing made a gulf between you! There could be no marriage in such a case. She could not bear it, nor could you. But please know this, Mr. Calhoun, that she never believed you killed Erris Boyne. She has said so again and again. You are the only man who has ever touched her mind or her senses, though many have sought her. Wherever she goes men try to win her, but she has no thought for any. Her mind goes back to you. Just when you entered the garden I learned—and only then—that you were here. She hid it from me, but Darius Boland knew, and he had seen your man, Michael Clones, and she had then made him tell me. I was incensed. I was her mother, and yet she had hid the thing from me. I thought she came to this island for the sake of Salem, and I found that she came not for Salem, but for you. . . . Ah, Mr. Calhoun, she deserves what you did to save her, but you should not have done it.'

'She deserves all that any better man might do. Why don't you marry her to some great man in your Republic? It would settle my trouble for me and free her mind from anxiety. Mrs. Llyn, we are not children, you and I. You know life, and so do I, and——'

She interrupted him. 'Be sure of this, Mr. Calhoun, she knows life even better than either of us. She is, and has always been, a girl of sense and judgment. When she was a child she was my master, even in Ireland. Yet she was obedient and faithful, and kept her head in all vexed things. She will have her way, and she will have it as she wants it, and in no other manner. She is one of the world's great women. She is unique. Child as she is, she still understands all that men do, and does it. Under her hands the estates in Virginia have developed even more than under the hands of my brother. She controls like another Elizabeth. She has made those estates run like a spool of thread, and she will do the same here with Salem. Be sure of that.'

'Why does she not marry? Is there no man she can bear? She could have the highest, that's sure.'

He spoke with passion and insistence. If she were married his trouble would be over. The worst would have come to him—like death. His eyes were only two dark fires in a face that was as near to tragic pain crystallized as any the world has seen. Yet there was in it some big commanding thing, that gave it a ghastly handsomeness almost; that bathed his look in dignity and power, albeit a reckless power, a thing that would not be stayed by any blandishments. He had the look of a lost angel, one who fell with Belial in the first days of sin.

'There is no man she can bear—except here in Jamaica. It is no use. Your governor, Lord Mallow, whom she knew in Ireland, who is distant kin of mine, he has already made advances here to her, as he did in Ireland—you did not know that. Even before we left for Virginia he came to see us, and brought her books and flowers, and here, on our arrival, he brought her choicest blooms of his garden. She is rich, and he would be glad of an estate that brings in scores of thousands of pounds yearly. He has asked us to stay at King's House, but we have declined. We start for Salem in a few hours. She wants her hand on the wheel.'

'Lord Mallow—he courts her, does he?' His face grew grimmer. 'Well, she might do worse, though if she were one of my family I would rather see her in her grave than wedded to him. For he is selfish—aye, as few men are! He would eat and keep his apple too. His theory is that life is but a game, and it must be played with steel. He would squeeze the life out of a flower, and give the flower to his dog to eat. He thinks first and always of himself. He would—but there, he would make a good husband as husbands go for some women, but not for this woman! It is not because he is my enemy I say this. It is because there is only one woman like your daughter, and that is herself; and I would rather see her married to a hedger that really loved her than to Lord Mallow, who loves only one being on earth—himself. But see, Mrs. Llyn, now that you know all, now that we three have met again, and this island is small and tragedy is at our doors, don't you think your daughter should be told the truth. It will end everything for me. But it would be better so. It is now only cruelty to hide the truth, harsh to continue a friendship which will only appal her in the end. If we had not met again like this, then silence might have been best ; but as she is not cured of her tender friendship made upon the hills at Playmore, isn't it well to end it all ? Your conscience will be clearer, and so will mine. We shall have done the right thing at last. Why did you not tell her who her father was ? Then why blame me ! You held your peace to save your daughter, as you thought. I held my tongue for the same reason ; but she is so much a woman now, that she will understand, as she could not have understood years ago in Limerick. In God's name, let us speak. One of us should tell her, and I think it should be you. And see, though I know I did right in withholding the facts about the quarrel with Erris Boyne, yet I favour telling her that he was a traitor. The whole truth now, or nothing. That is my view.'

He saw how lined and sunken was her face, he noted the weakness of her carriage, he realized the task he was putting on her, and his heart relented. 'No, I will do it,' he added, with sudden will, 'and I will do it now, if I may.'

'Oh, not to-day—not to-day!' she said with a piteous look. 'Let it not be to-day. It is our first day here, and we are due at King's House to-night, even in an hour from now.'

'You want her at her glorious best, is that it ?' It seemed too strange that the pure feminine should show at a time of crisis like this, but there it was. It was this woman's way. But he added presently: 'When she asks you what we have talked about, what will you say?'

'Is it not easy? I am a mother,' she said meaningly.

'And I am an ex-convict, and a mutineer—is that it?'

She inclined her head. 'It should not be difficult to explain. When you came I was speaking as I felt, and she will not think it strange if I give that as my reason.'

'But is it wise? Isn't it better to end it all now? Suppose Lord Mallow tells her.'

'He did not before. He is not likely now,' was the vexed reply. 'Is it a thing a gentleman will speak of to a lady?'

'But you do not know Mallow. If he thought she had seen me to-day, he would not hesitate. What would you do if you were Lord Mallow?'

'No, not to-day,' she persisted. 'It is all so many years ago. It can hurt naught to wait a little longer.'

'When and where shall it be?' he asked gloomily.

'At Salem—at Salem. We shall be settled then—and steady. There is every reason why you should consider me. I have suffered as few women have suffered, and I do not hate you. I am only sorry.'

Far down at the other end of the garden he saw Sheila. Her face was in profile—an exquisite silhouette. She moved slowly among the pimento bushes.

'As you wish,' he said with a heavy sigh. The sight of the girl anguished his soul.

Chapter XVIII *At Salem*

THE plantation of Salem was in a region below the Pedro Plains in the parish of St. Elizabeth, where grow the aloe, and torch-thistle, and clumps of wood which alter the appearance of the plain from the South Downs of England, but where thousands of cattle and horses even in those days were maintained. The air of the district was dry and elastic, and it filtered down to the valleys near like that where Salem was with its clusters of negro huts and offices, its mills and distilleries where sugar and rum were made. Salem was situated on the Black River, accessible by boats and canoes. The huts of negro slaves were near the sugar mills, without regard to order, but in clusters of banana, avocado-pear, limes and oranges, and with the cultivated land round their huts make an effective picture.

One day every fortnight was allowed the negroes to cultivate their crops, and give them a chance to manufacture mats for beds, bark-ropes, wicker-chairs and baskets, earthen jars, pans, and that kind of thing. The huts themselves were primitive to a degree, the floor being earth, the roof, of palm-thatch or the leaves of the cocoa-nut tree, the sides hard-posts driven in the ground and interlaced with wattle and plaster, and inside scarcely high enough for its owner to walk upright. The furniture was scant—a quatre, or bed, made of a platform of boards, with a mat and a blanket, some low stools, a small table, an earthen water-jar, and some smaller ones, a pail and an iron pot, and calabashes which did duty for plates, dishes and bowls. In one of the two rooms making the hut, there were always the ashes of the night-fire, without which negroes could not sleep in comfort.

These were the huts of the lowest grade of negro-slaves of the fields. The small merchants and the domestics had larger houses with boarded floors, some even with linen sheets and mosquito nets, and shelves with plates and dishes of good ware. Every negro received a yearly allowance of Osnaburgh linen, woollen, baize and checks for clothes, and some planters also gave them hats and handkerchiefs, knives, needles and thread, and so on.

Every plantation had a surgeon who received a small sum for attendance on every slave, while special cases of midwifery, inoculation, etc., had a particular allowance. The surgeon had to attend to about four hundred to five hundred negroes, on an income of £150 per annum, and board and lodging and washing, besides what he made from his practice with the whites.

Salem was no worse than some other plantations on the island, but it was far behind such plantations as that owned by Dyck Calhoun, and had been notorious for the cruelties committed on it. To such an estate a lady like Sheila Llyn would be a boon. She was not on the place a day before she started reforms which would turn the plantation into a model scheme. Houses, food, treatment of the negroes, became at once a study to her, and her experience in Virginia was invaluable. She had learned there not to work the slaves too hard in the warm period of the day; and she showed her interest by having served at her own table the favourite olio the slaves made of plantains, bananas, yams, calalue, eddoes, cassavi, and sweet potatoes boiled with salt fish and flavoured with cayenne pepper. This, with the unripe roasted plaintain as bread, was a native relish and health-giving food.

Ever since the day when she had seen Dyck Calhoun at Spanish Town she had been disturbed in mind. Dyck had shown a reserve which she felt was not wholly due to his having been imprisoned for manslaughter. In one way he looked little older. His physique was as good, or better than when she first saw him on the hills of Playmore. It was athletic, strenuous, elastic. Yet there was about it the abandonment of despair—at least of recklessness. The face was older, the head more powerful, the hair slightly touched with grey—rather there was one spot in the hair almost pure white; a strand of winter in the foliage of summer. It gave a touch of the bizarre to a distinguished head, it lent an air of the singular to a personality which had flare and force—an almost devilish force. That much was to be said for him, that he had not sought to influence her to his own advantage. She was so surrounded in America by men who knew her wealth and prized her beauty, she was so much a figure in Virginia, that any reserve with regard to herself was noticeable. She was enough feminine to have pleasure in the fact that she was thought desirable by men; yet it played an insignificant part in her life. It did not give her conceit. It was only like a frill on the skirts of life. It did not play any part in her character. Certainly Dyck Calhoun had not flattered her.

That one to whom she had written, as she had done, should remove himself so from the place of the deserving friend, one whom she had not deserted while he was in jail as a criminal—that he should treat her so, gave every nerve a thrill of protest. Sometimes she trembled in indignation, and then afterwards gave herself to the work on the estate or in the household—its reform and its re-arrangement; though the house was like most in Jamaica, had adequate plate, linen, glass and furniture. At the lodgings in Spanish Town, after Dyck Calhoun had left, her mother had briefly said that she had told Dyck he could not expect the conditions of the Playmore friendship should be renewed; that, in effect, she had warned him off. To this Sheila had said that the killing of a man whose life was bad might be punishable. In any case, that thing was in another land, under abnormal conditions; and, with utter lack of logic, she saw no reason why he should be socially punished in Jamaica for what he had been legally punished for in Ireland. As for the mutiny, he had done what any honest man of spirit would do; also, he had by great bravery and skill brought victory to the king's fleet in West Indian waters.

Then it was she told her mother how she had always disobeyed her commands where Dyck was concerned, that she had written to him while he was in jail; that she had come to Jamaica more to see him than to reform Salem; that she had the old Celtic spirit of brotherhood, and she would not be driven from it. In a sudden burst of anger her mother had charged her with deceit; but the girl said she had followed her conscience, and she dismissed it all with a gesture as emphatic as her mother's anger.

That night they had dined with Lord Mallow, and she saw that his attentions had behind them the deep purpose of marriage. She had not been overcome by the splendour of his retinue and table, or by the magnificence of his guests; though the military commander-in-chief and the temporary admiral on the station did their utmost to entertain her, and some of the local big-wigs were pompous. Lord Mallow had ability and knew how to use it; and he was never so brilliant as on this afternoon, for they dined while it was still daylight and hardly evening. He told her of the customs of the country, of the people; and slyly and effectively he satirized some of his grandiloquent guests. Not unduly, for one of them, the most renowned in the island, came to him after dinner as he sat talking to Sheila, and said: 'I'm very sorry, your honour, but good Almighty God, I must go home and cool coppers.' Then he gave Sheila a hot yet clammy hand, and bade her welcome as a citizen to the island, 'alien but respected, beautiful but capable!' Sheila had seen a few of the Creole ladies present at their best—large-eyed, simple, not to say primitive in speech, and very unaffected in manner. She had learned also that the way to the Jamaican heart was by a full table and a little flattery.

One incident at dinner had impressed her greatly. Not far away from her was a young lady, beautiful in face and person, and she had seen a scorpion suddenly shoot into her sleeve and ruthlessly strike and strike the arm of the girl, who gave one cry only and then was still. Sheila saw the man next to the girl—he was a native officer—secure the scorpion, and then whip from his pocket a little bag of indigo, dip it in water, and apply the bag to the wounded arm, immediately easing the wound. This had all been done so quickly that it was over before the table had been upset, almost.

'That is the kind of thing we have here,' said Lord

Mallow. ‘ There is a lady present who has seen in one day a favourite black child bitten by a conger-eel, found a large centipede in her nursery, a snake crawl from under her child's pillow, and her son nearly die from a bite of the black spider with the red spot on its tail. It is a life that has its trials—and its compensations.’

‘ I saw a man's head on a pole on my way to King's House. You have to use firm methods here,’ Sheila said in reply. ‘ It is not all a rose-garden. You have to apply force.’

Lord Mallow smiled grimly. *‘ C'est la force morale toujours.’*

‘ Ah, I should not have thought it was moral force always,’ was the ironical reply.

‘ We have criminals here,’ declared the governor with aplomb, ‘ and they need some handling, I assure you. We have in this island one of the worst criminals in the British Empire.’

‘ Ah, I thought he was in the United States ! ’ answered the girl sedately

‘ You mean General George Washington,’ remarked the governor. ‘ No, it is one who was a friend and fellow-countryman of yours before he took to killing unarmed men.’

‘ You refer to Mr. Dyck Calhoun, I doubt not, sir ? Well, he is still a friend of mine, and I saw him to-day—this afternoon, before I came here. I understood that the Crown had pardoned his mutiny.’

The governor started. He was plainly annoyed.

‘ The crime is there just the same,’ he replied. ‘ He mutinied, and he stole a king's ship, and took command of it, and brought it out here.’

‘ And saved you and your island, I understand.’

‘ Ah, he said that, did he ? ’

'He said nothing at all to me about it. I have been reading the Jamaica *Cornwall Chronicle* the last three years.'

'He is ever a source of anxiety to me,' declared the governor.

'I knew he was once in Phœnix Park years ago,' was the demure yet sharp reply, 'but I thought he was a good citizen here—a good and well-to-do citizen.'

Lord Mallow flushed slightly. 'Phœnix Park—ah, he was a capable fellow with the sword! I said so always, and I'd back him now against a champion; but many a bad man has been a good swordsman.'

'So, that's what good swordsmanship does, is it? I wondered what it was that did it. I hear you fight him still—but with a bludgeon, and he dodges it.'

'I do not understand,' declared Lord Mallow tartly.

'Ah, wasn't there some difference over his going for the treasure to Haiti? Some one told me, I think, that you were not in favour of his getting his ticket-of-leave, or whatever it is called, and that the provost-marshal gave it to him, as he had the right to do.'

'You have wide sources of information in this case. I wonder——'

'No, your honour need not wonder. I was told that by a gentleman on the steamer coming here. He was a native of the island, I think—or perhaps it was the captain, or the mate, or the boatswain. I can't recall. Or maybe it came to me from my manager, Darius Boland, who hears things wherever he is, one doesn't know how; but he hears them. He is to me what your aide-de-camp is to you,' she nodded towards a young man near by at the table.

'And do you dress your Darius Boland as I dress my *aide* in scarlet, with blue facings and golden embroidery, and put a stiff hat with a feather on his head ? '

'But no, he does not need such things. I am a Republican now. I am a citizen of the United States, where men have no need of uniform to tell the world what they are. You shall see my Darius Boland—indeed, you have seen him. He was there to-day when you gave me the distinction of your presence.'

'That dry, lean, cartridge of a fellow, that pair of pincers with a face ! '

'And a *tongue*, your honour. If you did not hear it, yet you will hear it. He is to be my manager here. So he will be under your control—if I permit him.'

'If you permit him, mistress ? '

'If I permit him, yes. You are a power, but you are not stronger than the laws and rules you make. For instance, there was the case of Mr. Dyck Calhoun. When he came, you were for tying him up in one little corner of this island—the hottest part, I know, near to Kingston, where it averages ninety degrees in the shade at any time of the year. But the king you represent had not restricted his liberties so, and you being the king, that is, yourself, were forced to abide by your own regulations. So it may be the same with Darius Boland. He may want something, and you, high up, looking down, will say, "What devilry is here ! " and decline. He will then turn to your chief-justice or provost-marshal-general, or a deputy of the provost-marshal, and they will say that Darius Boland shall have what he wants, because it is the will of the will you represent.'

Almost the last words the governor used to her were these : 'Those only live at peace here who are at peace with me'; and her reply had been : 'But

Mr. Dyck Calhoun lives at peace, does he not, your honour ?'

To that he had replied : 'No man is at peace while he has yet desires to satisfy.' He paused a minute and then added : 'That Erris Boyne killed by Dyck Calhoun—did you ever see him that you remember ?'

'Not that I remember,' she replied quickly. 'I never lived in Dublin.'

'That may be. But did you never know his history ?' She shook her head in negation. His eyes searched her face carefully, and he was astonished when he saw no sign of confusion there. 'Good God, she doesn't know. She's never been told !' he said to himself. 'This is too startling. I'll speak to the mother.'

A little later he turned from the mother with astonishment. 'It's madness,' he remarked to himself. 'She will find out. Some one will tell her. . . . By Heaven, I'll tell her first,' he hastily said. 'When she knows the truth, Calhoun will have no chance on earth. Yes, I'll tell her myself. But I'll tell no one else,' he added ; for he felt that Sheila, once she knew the truth, would resent his having told abroad the true story of the Erris Boyne affair.

So Sheila and her mother had gone to their lodgings with depression, but each with a clear purpose in her mind. Mrs. Llyn was determined to tell her daughter what she ought to have known long before ; and Sheila was firm to make the one man who had ever interested her understand that he was losing much that was worth while keeping.

Then had followed the journey to Salem. Yet all the while for Sheila one dark thought kept hovering over everything. Why should life be so complicated ? Why should this one man who seemed capable and had the temperament of the Irish hills and vales be the victim of punishment and shame—why should he shame her?

Suddenly, without her mother's knowledge, she sent Darius Boland through the hills in the early morning to Enniskillen, Dyck Calhoun's place, with a letter which said only this: 'Is it not time that you came to wish us well in our new home? We shall expect you to-morrow.'

When Dyck read this note he thought it was written by Sheila, but inspired by the mother; and he lost no time in making his way down across the country to Salem, which he reached a few hours after sunrise. At the doorway of the house he met Mrs. Llyn.

'Have you told her?' he asked in anxiety.

Astonished at his presence she could make no reply for a moment. 'I have told her nothing,' she answered. 'I meant to do so this morning. I meant to do it—I must.'

'She sent me a letter asking if it was not time I came to wish you well in your house, and you and she would expect me to-day.'

'I knew naught of her writing you,' was the reply—'naught at all. But now that you are here, will you not tell her all?'

Dyck smiled grimly. 'Where is she?' he asked. 'I will tell her.'

The mother pointed down the garden. 'Yonder by the clump of palms I saw her a moment ago. If you go that way you will find her.'

In another moment Dyck Calhoun was on his way to the clump of palms, and before he reached it, the girl came out into the path. She was dressed in a black silk skirt with a white bodice and lace, as he had seen her on her arrival in Kingston, and at her throat was a sprig of the wild pear-tree. When she saw him, she gave a slight start, then stood still, and he came to her.

'I have your letter,' he said, 'and I came to say what I ought to say about your living here: you will bring blessings to the place.'

She looked at him steadfastly. 'Shall we talk here,' she said, 'or inside the house? There is a little shelter here in the trees'—pointing to the right—'a shelter built by the late manager. It has the covering of a hut, but it is open at two sides. Will you come?'

As she went on ahead, he could not fail to notice how slim and trim she was, how perfectly her figure seemed to fit her gown—as though she had been poured into it; and yet the folds of her skirt waved and floated like silky clouds around her! Under cover of the shelter, she turned and smiled at him.

'You have seen my mother?'

'I have just come from her,' he answered. 'She bade me tell you what ought to have been told long ago, and you were not, for there seemed no reason that you should. You were young and ignorant and happy. You had no cares, no sorrows. The sorrows that had come to your mother belonged to days when you were scarce out of the cradle. But you did not know. You were not aware that your mother had divorced your father for crime against marital fidelity and great cruelty. You did not know even who that father was. Well, I must tell you. Your father was a handsome man, a friend of mine until I knew the truth about him, and then he died—I killed him, so the Court said.'

Her face became ghastly pale. After a moment of anguished bewilderment, she said: 'You mean that Erris Boyne was my father?'

'Yes, I mean that. They say I killed him. They say that he was found with no sword drawn, but that my open sword lay on the table beside me while I was asleep, and that it had let out his life-blood.'

'Why was he killed?' she asked, horror-stricken and with pale lips.

'I do not know, but if I killed him, it was because I revolted from the proposals he made to me. I——'

He paused, for the look on her face was painful to see, and her body was as that of one who had been struck by lightning. It had a crumpled, stricken look, and all force seemed to be driven from it. It had the look of crushed vitality. Her face was set in paleness, her eyes were frightened, her whole person was, as it were, in ghastly captivity. His heart smote him, and he pulled himself together to tell her all.

'Go on,' she said. 'I want to hear. I want—to know all. I ought to have known—long ago; but that can't be helped now. Continue—please.'

Her words had come slowly, in gasps almost, and her voice was so frayed he could scarcely recognize it. All the pride of her nature seemed shattered.

'If I killed him,' he said presently, 'it was because he tried to tempt me from my allegiance to the Crown, to become a servant of France, to——'

He stopped short, for a cry came from her lips which appalled him.

'My God—my God!' she said with bloodless lips, her eyes fastened on his face, her every look and motion the inflection of despair. 'Go on—tell all,' she added presently with more composure.

Swiftly he described what happened in the little room at the traitor's tavern, of the momentary reconciliation and the wine that he drank, drugged wine poured out but not drunk by Erris Boyne, and of his later unconsciousness. At last he paused.

'Why did these things not come out at the trial?' she asked in hushed tones.

He made a helpless gesture. 'I did not speak of them because I thought of you. I hid it—I did not want you to know what your father was.'

Something like a smile gathered at her pale lips. 'You saved me for the moment, and condemned yourself for ever,' she said in a voice of torture. 'If you had told what he was—if you had told that, the jury would not have condemned you, they would not have sent you to prison.'

'I believe I did the right thing,' he said. 'If I killed your father, prison was my proper punishment. But I can't remember. There was no other clue, no other guide to judgment. So the law said I killed him, and—he had evidently not drawn his sword. It was clear he was killed defenceless.'

'You killed a defenceless man!' Her voice was sharp with agony. 'That was mentioned at the trial—but I did not believe it then—in that long ago.' She trembled to her feet from the bench where she was sitting. 'And I do not believe it now—no, on my soul, I do not.'

'But it makes no difference, you see. I was condemned for killing your father, and the world knows that Erris Boyne was your father, and here Lord Mallow, the governor, knows it; and there is no chance of friendship between you and me. Since the day he was found dead in the room, there was no hope for our friendship, for anything at all between us that I had wished to be there. You dare not be friends with me——'

Her face suddenly suffused and she held herself upright with an effort. She was about to say, 'I dare, Dyck—I do dare!' but he stopped her with a reproving gesture.

'No, no, you dare not, and I would not let you if you would. I am an ex-convict. They say I killed your father, and the way to understanding between us is closed.'

She made a protesting gesture. 'Closed! Closed! —But is it closed? No, no, some one else killed him, not you. You couldn't have done it. You would have fought him—fought him as you did Lord Mallow, and in fighting you might have killed him, but your sword never let out his life when he was defenceless—never.'

A look of intense relief, almost of happiness, came to Dyck's face. 'That is like you, Sheila, but it does not cure the trouble. You and I are as far apart as noon and midnight. The law has said the only thing that can be said upon it.'

She sank down again upon the wooden bench. 'Oh, how mad you were, not to tell the *whole* truth long ago! You would not have been condemned, and then——'

She paused overcome, and his self-control almost deserted him. With strong feeling he burst out: 'And then, we might have come together? No, your mother—your friends, myself, could not have let that be. See, Sheila, I will tell you the whole truth now—aye, the whole absolute truth. I have loved you since the first day I saw you on the hills when you and I rescued Christopher Dogan. Not a day has passed since then when you were not more to me than any other woman in all the world.'

A new light came into her face, the shadows left her eyes, and the pallor fled from her lips. 'You loved me?' she said in a voice grown soft—husky still, but soft as the light in a summer heaven. 'You loved me—and have always loved me since we first met?'

Her look was so appealing, so passionate and so womanly, that he longed to reach out his arms to her, and say, 'Come—come home, Sheila,' but the situation did not permit that, and only his eyes told the story of what was in his mind.

'I have always loved you, Sheila, and shall do so while I have breath and life. I have always given you the best that is in me, tried to do what was good for us both, since my misfortune—crime, Lord Mallow calls it, as does the world. Never a sunrise that does not find you in the forefront of all the lighted world; never a flower have I seen that does not seem sweeter—it brings thoughts of you; never a crime that does not deepen its shame because you are in the world. In prison, when I used to mop my floor and clean down the walls; when I swept the dust from the corners; when I folded up my convict clothes; when I ate the prison food and sang the prison hymns; when I placed myself beside the bench in the workshop to make things that would bring cash to my fellow-prisoners in their need; when I saw a minister of religion or heard the Litany; when I counted up the days, first that I had spent in jail and then the days I had still to spend in jail; when I read the books from the prison library of the land where you had gone, and of the struggle there; when I saw you, in my mind's eye, in the cotton-fields or on the verandah of your house in Virginia—I had but one thought, and that was the look in your face at Playmore and Limerick, the sound of your voice as you came singing up the hill just before I first met you, the joyous beauty of your body.'

'And at sea?' she whispered with a gesture at once beautiful and pathetic, for it had the motion of helplessness and hopelessness. What she had heard had stirred her soul, and she wanted to hear more—or was it that she wished to drain the cup now that it was held to her lips?—drain it to the last drop of feeling.

'At sea,' he answered, with his eyes full of intense feeling—'at sea, I was free at last, doomed as I thought, anguished in spirit, and yet with a wild hope that out of it would come deliverance. I expected to lose my life, and I lived each day as though it would be my last. I was chief rogue in a shipful of rogues, chief sinner in a hell of sinners, and yet I had no remorse and no regret. I had done all with an honest purpose, with the good of the sailors in my mind; and so I lived in daily touch with death, honour and dishonour. Yet I never saw a sailor in the shrouds, or heard the night watch call "All's well!" in the midst of night and mutiny, that I did not long for a word from you that would take away the sting of death. Those days at sea for ten long weeks were never free from anxiety, not anxiety for myself, only for the men who had put me where I was, had given me captain's rank, had——'

Suddenly he stopped, and took from his pocket the letter he was writing on the very day she landed in Jamaica. He opened it and studied it for a moment with a dark look in his face.

'This I wrote even as you were landing in Jamaica, and I knew naught of your coming. It was an outbreak of my soul. It was the truth written to you and for you, and yet with the feeling that you would never see it. I was still writing it when Michael Clones came up the drive to tell me you and your mother were here. Now, I know not what Christopher Dogan would say of it, but I say it is amazing that in the hour you were first come to this land I should be moved to tell you the story of my life since I left prison; since, on receiving your letter in London, forwarded from Dublin, I joined the navy. But here it is with all the truth and terror in it.—Aye, there was terror, for it gave the soul of my life to one I never thought to see again; and, if seeing, should be compelled to do what I have done—tell her the whole truth at once and so have it over.

'But do not think that in telling it now I repent of my secrecy. I repent of nothing; I would not alter anything. What was to be is, and what is has its place in the book of destiny. No, I repent nothing, yet here now I give you this to read while still my story of the days of which you know is in your ears. Here it is. It will tell the whole story; for when you have read it and do understand, then we part to meet no more as friends. You will go back to Virginia, and I will stay here. You will forgive the unwilling wrong I have done you, but you will make your place in life without thought of me. You will marry some one—not worthy of you, for that could not be; but you will take to yourself some man from among the men of this world. You will set him apart from all other men as yours, and he will be happy, having been blessed beyond deserving. You will not regret coming here; but you will desire our friendship to cease; and what has been to be no more, while the tincture of life is in your veins. Sheila, read this thing, for it is the rest of the story until now.'

He handed her the papers, and she took them with an inclination of the head which said: 'Give it to me. I will read it now while my eyes can still bear to read it. I have laid on my heart the nettle of shame, and while it is still burning there I will read all that you have to teach me.'

'I will go out in the garden while you read it,' he said. 'In a half-hour I will come back, and then we can say good-bye,' he added, with pain in his voice, but firmly.

'No, do not go,' she urged. 'Sit here on the bench—at the end of it here,' she said, motioning with her hand.

He shook his head in negation. 'No, I will go and say to your mother that I have told you, and ease her mind, for I know she herself meant to tell you.'

As he went he looked at her face closely. It was so young, so pathetic, so pale, yet so strangely beautiful, and her forehead was serene. That was one of her characteristics. In all her life, her forehead remained untroubled and unlined. Only at her mouth and in her eyes did misery or sorrow show. He looked into her eyes now, and he was pleased with what he saw; for they had in them the glow of understanding and the note of will which said: 'You and I are parted, but I believe in you, and I will not show I am a weak woman by futile horror. We shall meet no more, but I shall remember you.'

That was what he saw, and it was what he wished to see. He knew her character would stand the test of any trial, and it had done so. Horror had struck her, but had not overwhelmed her. She had cried out in her agony, but she had not been swept out into chaos. She had no weak passions and no futilities. But as he turned away now, it was with the sharp conviction that he had dealt a blow from which the girl would recover, but would never be the same again. She was rich 'beyond the dreams of avarice,' but that would not console her. She had resources within herself, had what would keep her steady. Her real power and force, her real hope, were in her regnant soul which was not to be cajoled by life's subterfuges. Her lips opened now, as though she would say something, but nothing came from them. She only shook her head sadly, as if to say: 'You understand. Go, and when you come again, it will be for us to part in peace—at least in peace.'

Out in the garden he found her mother. After the first agitated greeting—agitated on her part, he said: 'The story has been told, and she is now reading——'

He told her the story of the manuscript, and added that Sheila had carried herself with courage.

Presently the woman said to him: 'She never believed you killed Erris Boyne. Well, it may not help the situation, but I say too, that I do not believe you did. I cannot understand why you did not deny having killed him.'

'I could not deny. In any case, the law punished me for it, and the book is closed for ever.'

'Have you never thought that some one——'

'Yes, I have thought, but who is there? The crowd at the Dublin hotel where the thing was done were secret, and they would lie the apron off a bishop. No, there is no light, and, to tell the truth, I care not now.'

'But if you are not guilty—it is not too late; there is my girl! If the real criminal should appear—can you not see?'

The poor woman, distressedly pale, her hair still abundant, her eyes still bright, her pulses aglow, as they had ever been, made a gesture of appeal with hands that were worn and thin. She had charm still, in a way as great as her daughter's.

'I can see—but, Mrs. Llyn, I have no hope. I am a man whom some men fear——'

'Lord Mallow!' she interjected.

'He does not fear me. Why do you say that?'

'I speak with a woman's intuition. I don't know what he fears, but he does fear you. You are a son of history; you had a duel with him, and beat him; you have always beaten him, even here where he has been supreme as governor—from first to last, you have beaten him.'

'I hope I shall be even with him at the last—at the very last,' was Dyck Calhoun's reply. 'We were made to be foes. We were from the first. I felt it when I saw him at Playmore. Nothing has changed since then. He will try to destroy me here, but I will see it through. I will try and turn his rapier-points. I will not be the target of his arrows without making some play against him. The man is a fool. I could help him here, but he will have none of it, and he is running great risks. He has been warned that the Maroons are restive, that the black slaves will rise if the Maroons have any initial success, and he will listen to no advice. He would not listen to me, but, knowing that, I got the provost-marshal to approach him, and when he knew my hand was in it, he stiffened. He would have naught to do with it, and so no preparations are made. And up there'—he turned and pointed—'up there in Trelawny the Maroons are plotting and planning, and any day an explosion may occur. If it occurs no one will be safe, especially if the blacks rise too—I mean the black slaves. There will be no safety then for any one.'

'For us as well, you mean?'

'For you as well as all others, and you are nearer to Trelawny than most others. You are in their path. So be wise, Mrs. Llyn, and get back to Virginia as soon as may be. It is a better place than this.'

'My daughter is mistress here,' was the sorrowful reply. 'She will have her own way.'

'Your daughter will not care to stay here now,' he answered firmly.

'She will do what she thinks her duty in spite of her own feelings, or yours, or mine. It is her way, and it has always been her way.'

'I will tell her what I fear, and she may change her mind.'

'But the governor may want her to stay,' answered Mrs. Llyn none too sagely, but with that in her mind which seemed to justify her.

'Lord Mallow—oh, if you think there is any influence in him to keep her, that is another question,' said Dyck with a grim smile. 'But, nevertheless, I think you should leave here and go back to Virginia. It is no safe place for two ladies, in all senses. Whatever Lord Mallow thinks or does, this is no place for you. This place is your daughter's for her to do what she chooses with it, and I think she ought to sell it. There would be no trouble in getting a purchaser. It is a fine property.'

'But the governor might not think as you do; he might not wish it sold.'

Mrs. Llyn was playing a bold, indeed a reckless game. She wanted to show Dyck there were others who would interest themselves in Sheila even if he, Dyck, were blotted from the equation; that the girl could look high, if her mind turned towards marriage. Also she felt that Dyck should know the facts before any one else, so that he would not be shocked in the future, if anything happened. Yet in her deepest heart she wished him well. She liked him as she had never liked any of Sheila's admirers, and if the problem of Erris Boyne had been solved, she would gladly have seen him wedded to Sheila.

'What has the governor to do with it!' he declared. 'It is your daughter's own property, and she is free to hold or to part with it. There is no Crown consent to ask, no vice-regal approval needed.'

Suddenly he became angry, almost excited. His blood pounded in his veins. Was this man, Mallow, to come between his and her fate always, come into his problem at the most critical moment. 'God in heaven!' he said in a burst of passion, 'is this a land of the British Empire or is it not? Why should that man break in on every crisis? Why should he do this or that—say yea or nay, give or take away! He is the king's representative, but he is bound by laws as rigid as any that bind you or me. What has he to do with your daughter or what concerns her? Is there not enough trouble in the world without bringing in Lord Mallow? If he——'

He stopped short, for he saw coming from the summer-house, Sheila with his paper in her hand. She walked slowly and with dignity. She carried her head high and firmly, and the skin of her face was shining with light as she came on. Dyck noticed how her wide skirts flicked against the flowers that bordered the path, and how her feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground as she walked—a spirit, a regnant spirit of summer she seemed. But in her face there was no summer, there was only autumn and winter, only the bright frost of purpose. As she came, her mother turned as though to leave Dyck Calhoun. She called to her to wait, and Mrs. Llyn stood still, anxious. As Sheila came near she kept her eyes fixed on Dyck. When she reached them, she held out the paper to him.

'It is wonderful,' she said quietly, 'that which you have written, but it does not tell all; it does not say that you did not kill my father. You are punished for the crime, and we must abide by it, even though you did not kill Erris Boyne. It is the law that has done it, and we cannot abash the law.'

'We shall meet no more then!' said Dyck with decision.

Her lips tightened, her face paled. 'There are some things one may not do, and one of them is to be openly your friend—at present.'

He put the letter carefully away in his pocket, his hand shaking, then flicking an insect from the collar of his coat, he said gently, yet with an air of warning: 'I have been telling Mrs. Llyn about the Maroons up there'—he pointed towards Trelawny—'and I have advised your going back to Virginia. The Maroons may rise at any moment, and no care is being taken by Lord Mallow to meet the danger. If they rise, you, here, would be in their way, and I could not guarantee your safety. Besides, Virginia is a better place—a safer place than this,' he added with meaning.

'You wish to frighten me out of Jamaica,' she replied with pain in her voice. 'Well, I will not go till I have put this place in order and brought discipline and good living here. I shall stay here in Jamaica till I have done my task. There is no reason why we should meet. This place is not so large as Ireland or America, but it is large enough to give assurance we shall not meet. And if we meet, there is no reason why we should talk. As for the Maroons, when the trouble comes, I shall not be unprepared.' She smiled sadly. 'The governor may not take your advice, but I shall. And remember that I come from a land not without its dangers. We have Red Indians and black men there, and I can shoot.'

He waved a hand abruptly and then made a gesture

—such as an ascetic might make—of reflection, of submission. 'I shall remember every word you have said, and every note of your voice will be with me in all the lonely years to come. Good-bye—but no, let me say this before I go: I did not know that Erris Boyne was your father until after he was dead. So, if I killed him, it was in complete ignorance. I did not know. But we have outlived our friendship, and we must put strangeness in its place. Good-bye—God protect you!' he added looking into Sheila's eyes.

She looked at him with sorrow. Her lips opened but no words came forth. He passed on out of the garden, and presently they heard his horse's hoofs on the sand.

'He is a great gentleman,' said Mrs. Llyn.

Her daughter's eyes were dry and fevered. Her lips were drawn. 'We must begin the world again,' she said brokenly. Then suddenly she collapsed and sank upon the ground. 'My God—oh, my God!' she said.

Chapter XIX *Lord Mallow Intervenes*

TWO months went by. In that time Sheila and Dyck did not meet, though Dyck saw her more than once in the distance at Kingston. Yet they had never met since that wonderful day at Salem, when they had parted, as it might seem, for ever. Dyck had had news of her, however, for Darius Boland had come and gone between the two plantations, and had won Michael Clones' confidence. He knew more perhaps than he ever conveyed to Dyck, who saw him and talked with him, gave him advice as to the customs of Jamaica, and let him see the details in the management of Enniskillen.

Yet Dyck made no inquiries as to how Mrs. Llyn and Sheila were; first because he chose not to do so, and also because Darius Boland, at one time or another, would of his own accord tell what Mrs. Llyn and Sheila were doing. One day Boland brought word that the governor had, more than once, visited Salem with his suite; that he had sat in judgment on a case in Kingston concerning the estate of Salem, and had given decision in its favour; and that Mrs. Llyn and Sheila visited him at Spanish Town and were entertained at King's House at second breakfast and dinner—in short, that Lord Mallow was making hay in Salem Plantation. This was no surprise to Dyck. He had full intuition of the foray the governor would make on Sheila, her estate and wealth.

Lord Mallow had acted with discretion, and yet with sufficient passion to warrant some success. He was trying to make for himself a future which might mean the control of a greater colony even. If he had wealth, that would be almost a certainty, and he counted Sheila's gold as a guarantee of power. He knew well how great effect could be produced at Westminster and at the Royal Palace by a discreet display of wealth. He was also aware that no scandal could be made through an alliance with Sheila, for she had inherited long after the revolutionary war and with her skirts free from responsibility. England certainly would welcome wealth got through an Irish girl inheriting her American uncle's estates. So, steadily and happily, he pressed his suit. At his dinner-parties he gave her first place nearly always, and even broke the code controlling precedence when his secretary could be overruled. Thus Sheila was given honour when she did not covet it, and so it was that one day at Salem when the governor came to court her she was able to help Dyck Calhoun.

'Then you go to Enniskillen ?" Lord Mallow said to Darius Boland, as he entered the plantation, being met by the astute American.

'Sometimes, your honour,' was the careful reply.

'I suppose you know what Mr. Calhoun's career has been, eh ?'

'Oh, in a way, your honour. They tell me he is a good swordsman.'

The governor flushed. 'He told you that, did he ?'

'No, no, your honour, never. He told me naught. He does not boast. He's as modest as a man from Virginia. He does not brag at all.'

'Who told you, then ?'

'Ah, well, I heard it in the town! They speak of him there. They all know that Kingston and Spanish Town, and all the other places, would have been French by now, if it hadn't been for him. Oh, they talk a lot about him in Kingston and thereabouts!'

'What swordsmanship do they speak of that was remarkable?'

'Has your honour forgotten, then? Sure, seven years is a poor limit for a good memory.' The blow was a shrewd one, for Darius Boland knew that Phœnix Park must be a galling memory to his honour. But Darius did not care. He guessed why the governor was coming to Salem, and he could not shirk having his hand in it. He had no fear of the results.

'Aye, seven years is a poor limit,' he repeated.

The governor showed no feeling. He had been hit, and he took it as part of the game. 'Ah, you mean the affair in Phœnix Park?' he said with no apparent feeling.

Darius tossed his head a little. 'Wasn't it a clever bit of work? Didn't he get fame there by defeating one of the best swordsmen—in Ireland?'

Lord Mallow nodded. 'He got fame, which he lost in time,' he answered.

'You mean he put the sword that had done such good work against a champion into a man's bowels, without "by your leave," or "will you draw and fight"?'

'Something like that,' answered the governor sagely.

'Is it true you believed he'd strike a man that wasn't armed, sir?'

The governor winced, but showed nothing. 'He'd been drinking—he is a heavy drinker. Do you never drink with him?'

Darius Boland's face took on a strange look. Here was an intended insult to Dyck Calhoun. Right well the governor knew their relative social positions.

Darius pulled at the hair on his chin reflectively. 'Yes, I've drunk his liquor, but not as you mean, your honour. He'd drink with any man at all: he has no nasty pride. But he doesn't drink with me.'

'Modest enough he is to be a good republican, eh, Boland?'

'Since your honour puts it so, it must stand. I'll not dispute it, me being what I am and employed by whom I am.'

Darius Boland had a gift of saying the right thing in the right way, and he had said it now. The governor was not so dense as to put this man against him, for women were curious folk. They often attach importance to the opinion of a faithful servant and let it weigh against great men. He had once lost a possible fortune by spurning a little terrier of the daughter of the Earl of Shallow, and the lesson had sunk deep into his mind. He was high-placed, but not so high as to be sure of success where a woman was concerned, and he had made up his mind to capture Sheila Llyn, if so be she could be caught flying, or settled, or sleeping.

'Ah, well, he has drunk with worse men than republicans, Boland. He was a common sailor. He drank what was given him with whom it chanced in the fo'castle.'

Darius sniffed a little, and kept his head. 'But he changed all that, your honour, and gave sailormen better drink than they ever had, I hear. In Jamaica he treats his slaves as though they were men and not Mohicans.'

'Well, he'll have less freedom in future, Boland, for word has come from London that he's to keep to his estate and never leave it.'

Darius looked concerned, and his dry face wrinkled still more. 'Ah, and when was this word come, your honour?'

'But yesterday, Boland, and he'll do well to obey, for I have no choice but to take him in hand if he goes gallivanting.'

'Gallivanting—here, in Jamaica! Does your honour remember where we are?'

'Not in a bishop's close, Boland.'

'No, not in a bishop's close, nor in an archdeacon's garden. For of all places on earth where they defy religion, this is the worst, your honour. There's as much religion here as you'll find in a last year's bird's-nest. Gallivanting—where should he gallivant?'

The governor waved a contemptuous hand. 'It doesn't need ingenuity to find a place, for some do it on their own estate. I have seen it.'

Darius spoke sharply. 'Your honour, there's naught on Mr. Calhoun's estate that's got the taint, and he's not the man to go hunting for it. Drink—well, suppose a gentleman does take his quartern, is it a crime? I ask your honour, is that a crime in Jamaica?'

'It's no crime, Boland; nevertheless, your Mr. Calhoun will have to take his fill on his own land from the day I send him the command of the London Government."

'And what day will that be, your honour?'

To be questioned by one who had been a revolutionary was worse than distasteful to the governor. 'That day will be when I find the occasion opportune, my brave Boland,' he said sourly.

'Why "brave," your honour?' There was an ominous light in Darius' eye.

'Did you not fight with George Washington against the King of England—against King George? And if you did, was that not brave?'

'It was true, your honour,' came the firm reply. 'It was the one right good thing to do, as we proved it by the victory we had. We did what we set out to do. But see, if you will let a poor man speak his mind, if I were you I'd not impose the command on Mr. Calhoun.'

'Why, Boland?'

Darius spoke courageously. 'Your honour, he has many friends in Jamaica, and they won't stand it. Besides, *he* won't stand it. And if he contests your honour, the island will be with him.'

'Is he popular here as all that?' asked the governor with a shrug of the shoulders.

'They don't give their faith and confidence to order, your honour,' answered Darius with a dry inflection.

The burr in the voice did not escape the other's attentive ear. He swung a glance sharply at Darius.

'What is the secret of his popularity—how has it been made?' he asked morosely.

Darius' face took on a caustic look. 'He's only been in the island a short time, your honour, and I don't know that I'm a good judge, but I'll say the people here have great respect for bravery and character.'

'Character! Character!' sniffed the governor. 'Where did he get that?'

'Well, I don't know his age, but it's as old as he is—his character. Say, I'm afraid I'm talking too much, your honour. We speak our minds in Virginia; we never count the cost.'

The governor waved a deprecating hand. 'You'll find the measure of your speech in good time, Boland, I've no doubt. Meanwhile, you've got the pleasure of hunting it. Character, you say. Well, that isn't what the judge and jury said.'

Darius took courage again. Couldn't Lord Mallow have any decency?

'Judge and jury be damned, your honour,' he answered boldly. 'It was an Irish verdict. It had no sense. It was a bit of ballyhack. He did not kill an unarmed man. It isn't his way. Why, he didn't kill you when he had you at his mercy in Phœnix Park, now, did he, governor?'

A flush stole up the governor's face from his chin. Then he turned to Boland and looked him straight in the eyes. 'That's true. He had me at his mercy, and he did not take my life.'

'Then, why do you head the cabal against him? Why do you take joy in commanding him to stay on his estate? Is that grateful, your honour?'

The governor winced, but he said: 'It's what I am ordered to do, my man. I'm a servant of the Crown, and the Crown has ordained it.'

Again Darius grew stronger in speech. 'But why do you have pleasure in it? Is nothing left to your judgment? Do you say to me that if he keeps the freedom such as he has enjoyed, you'd punish him? Must the governor be as ruthless as his master? Look, your honour, I wouldn't impose that command—not till I'd taken his advice about the Maroons anyway. There's trouble brewing, and Mr. Calhoun knows it. He has warned you through the provost-marshal. I'd heed his warning, your honour, or it may injure your reputation as a ruler. No, I'd see myself in nethermost hell before I'd meddle with Mr. Calhoun. He's a dangerous man, when he's moved.'

' Boland, you'll succeed as a schoolmaster, when all else fails. You teach persistently.'

' Your honour is clever enough to know what's what, but I'd like to see the Maroons dealt with. This is not my country, but I've got interests here, or my mistress has, and that's the same to me. . . . Does your honour travel often without a suite ? '

The governor waved a hand behind him. ' I left them at the last plantation, and rode on alone. I felt safe enough till I saw you, Boland.'

He smiled grimly, and a grimmer smile stole to the lean lips of the manager of Salem. ' Fear is a good thing for forward minds, your honour,' he said with respect in the tone of his voice and challenge in the words.

' I'll say this, Boland, your mistress has been fortunate in her staff. You have a ready tongue.'

" Oh, I'm readier in other things, your honour, as you'd find on occasion. But I thank you for the compliment in a land where compliments are few. For a planter's country it has few who speak as well as they entertain. I'll say this for the land you govern, the hospitality is rich and rare.'

' In what way, Boland ? '

' Why, your honour, it is the custom for a man and his whole family to go on a visit to a neighbour, perhaps twenty or forty miles away, bring their servants—maybe a dozen or more—and sit down on their neighbour's hearthstone. There they eat his food, drink his wine, exhaust his fowl-yard and debilitate his cook till all the resources of the place are played out; then with both hands round his friend's neck the man and his people will say adieu, and go back to their own accumulated larder and await the return visit. The wonder is Jamaica is so rich, for truly the waste is harmful. We have the door open in Virginia, but not in that way. We welcome, but we don't debauch.'

The governor smiled. 'As you haven't old friends here, you should make your life a success—ah, there is the open door, Boland, and your mistress standing in it. But I come without my family, and with no fell purposes. I will not debilitate the cook; I will not exhaust the fowl-yard. A roasted plantain is good enough for me.'

Darius' looks quickened, and he jerked his chin up. 'So, your honour, so. But might I ask that you weigh carefully the warning of Mr. Calhoun. There's trouble at Trelawny. I have it from good sources, and Mr. Calhoun has made preparations against the sure risings. I'd take heed of what he says. He knows. Your honour, it is not my mistress in the doorway, it is Mrs. Llyn; she is shorter than my mistress.'

The governor shaded his brow with his hands. Then he touched up his horse. 'Yes, you are right, Boland. It is Mrs. Llyn. And look you, Boland, I'll think over what you've said about the Maroons and Mr. Calhoun. He's doing no harm as he is, that's sure. So why shouldn't he go on as he is? That's your argument, isn't it?'

Boland nodded. 'It's part of my argument, not all of it. Of course he's doing no harm; he's doing good every day. He's got a stiff hand for the shirker and the wanton, but he's a man that knows his mind, and that's a good thing in Jamaica.'

'Does he come here—ever?'

'He has been here only once since our arrival. There are reasons why he does not come, as your honour kens, knowing the history of Erris Boyne.'

A quarter of an hour later Darius Boland said to Sheila: 'He's got an order from England to keep Mr. Calhoun to his estate and to punish him, if he infringes the order.'

Sheila started. 'He will infringe the order if it's made, Boland. But the governor will be unwise to try and impose it. I will tell him so.'

'But, mistress, he should not be told that this news comes from me.'

'No, he should not, Boland. I can tempt him to speak of it, I think. He hates Mr. Calhoun, and will not need much prompting.'

Sheila had changed since she saw Dyck Calhoun last. Her face was thinner, but her form was even fuller than it was when she had bade him good-bye, as it seemed to him for ever, and as it at first seemed to her. Through anxious days and nights she had fought with the old passion; and at last it seemed the only way to escape from the torture was by making all thought of him impossible. How could this be done? Well, Lord Mallow would offer a way. Lord Mallow was a man of ancient Irish family, was a governor, had ability, was distinguished-looking in a curious lean way; and he had a real gift with his tongue. He stood high in the opinion of the big folk at Westminster, and had a future. He had a winning way with women—a subtle, perniciously attractive way with her sex, and to herself he had been delicately persuasive. He had the ancient gift of picturesqueness without ornamentation. He had a strong will and a healthy imagination. He was a man of mettle and decision.

Of all who had entered her field outside of Dyck Calhoun he was the most attractive; he was the nearest to the possible husband which she must one day take. And if at any day at all, why not now when she needed a man as she had never done—when she needed to forget? The sardonic critic might ask why she did not seek forgetfulness in flight; why she remained in Jamaica where was what she wished to forget. There was no valid reason, save a business one, why she should remain in Jamaica, and she was in a quandary when she put the question. There were, however, other reasons which she used when all else failed to satisfy her exigeant mind. There was the question of vessels to Virginia or New York. They were few and not good, and in any case they could have no comfortable journey to the United States for several weeks at least, for, since the revolutionary war, commerce with the United States was sparse.

Also, there was the question of Salem. She did not feel she ought to waste the property which her Uncle Bryan had nurtured with care. In justice to his memory, and in fairness to Darius Boland, she felt she ought to stay—for a time. It did not occur to her that these reasons would vanish like mist—that a wilful woman would sweep them into the basket of forgetfulness, and do what she wished in spite of reason: that all else would be sacrificed, if the spirit so possessed her. Truth was that, far back in her consciousness, there was a vision of better days and things. It was as though some angel touched the elbow of her spirit and said: 'Stay on, for things will be better than they seem. You will find your destiny here. Stay on.'

So she had stayed. She was deluding herself to believe that what she was doing was all for the best; that the clouds were rising; that her fate had fairer aspects than had seemed possible when Dyck Calhoun told her the terrible tale of the death of her father, Erris Boyne. Yet memory gave a touch of misery and bitterness to all she thought and did. For twenty-five years she had lived in ignorance as to her paternity. It surely was futile that her mother should have suffered all those years, with little to cheer her, while her daughter should be radiant in health and with a mind free from care or sadness. Yet the bitterest thing of all was the thought that her father was a traitor, and had died sacrificing another man. When Dyck had told her first, she had shivered with anger and shame—but anger and shame had gone. Only one thing gave her any comfort—the man who knew Erris Boyne was a traitor, and could profit by telling it, held his tongue for her own sake, kept his own counsel, and went to prison for four years as the price of his silence. He was now her neighbour and he loved her, and, if the shadow of a grave was not between them, would offer himself in marriage to her. This she knew beyond all doubt. He had given all a man can give—had saved her and killed her father—in ignorance had killed her father; in love had saved herself. What was to be done?

In a strange spirit Sheila entered the room where the governor sat with her mother. She had reached the limit of her powers of suffering. Soon after her mother had left the room, the governor said:

'Why do you think I have come here to-day?' He added to the words a note of sympathy, even of passion in his voice.

'It was to visit my mother and myself, and to see how Salem looks after our stay on it, was it not?'

'Yes, to see your mother and yourself, but chiefly the latter. As for Salem, it looks as though a master-mind had been at work, I see it in everything. The slaves are singing. Listen!'

He held up a finger as though to indicate attention and direction.

'One, two, three,
All de same;
Black, white, brown,
All de same;
All de same.
One, two, three——'

They could hear the words indistinctly.

'What do the words mean?' asked Sheila. 'I don't understand them.'

'No more do I, but I think they refer to the march of pestilence or plague. Numbers, colour, race, nothing matters, the plague sweeps all away. Ah, then, I was right,' he added. 'There is the story in other words. Listen again.'

To clapping of hands in unison, the following words were sung:

'New-come buckra,
He get sick,
He tak fever,
He be die;
He be die.
New-come buckra——'

'Well, it may be a chant of the plague, but it's lacking in poetry,' she remarked. 'Doesn't it seem so to you?'

'No, I certainly shouldn't go so far as that. Think of how much of a story is crowded into those few words. No waste, nothing thrown away. It's all epic, or that's my view, anyhow,' said the governor. 'If you look out on those who are singing it, you'd see they are resting from their labours; that they are fighting the ennui which most of us feel when we rest from our labours. Let us look at them.'

The governor stood up and came to the open French windows that faced the fields of sugar-cane. In the near distance were clumps of fruit trees, of hedges of lime and flowering shrubs, rows of orange trees, mangoes, red and purple, forbidden-fruit and grape-fruit, the large scarlet fruit of the acqui, the avocado-pear, the feathering bamboo, and the Jack-fruit tree, with its enormous fruit like pumpkins. Parrots were chattering in the acacia and in the Otaheite plum tree, with its bright pink blossoms like tassels, and flanking the negro huts by the river were bowers of grenadilla fruit. Around the negro huts were small individual plantations kept by the slaves, for which they had one day a fortnight, besides Sundays, free to work on their own account. Here and there also were patches of 'ground-fruit,' as the underground vegetables were called, while there passed by on their way to the open road leading to Kingston wains loaded with sugar-casks, drawn by oxen, and in two cases by sumpter mules.

'Is there anything finer than that in Virginia?' asked the governor. 'I have never been in Virginia, but I take this to be in some ways like that state. Is it?'

'In some ways only. We have not the same profusion of wild fruits and trees, but we have our share

—and it is not so hot as here. It is a better country, though.'

'In what way is it better?' the governor asked almost acidly.

'It is better governed.'

'What do you mean by that? Isn't Jamaica well governed?'

'Not so well that it couldn't be improved,' was Sheila's reply.

'What improvements would you suggest?' Lord Mallow asked urbanely, for he was set to play his cards carefully to-day.

'More wisdom in the governor,' was the cheerful and bright reply.

'Is he lacking in wisdom?'

'In some ways, yes.'

'Will you mind specifying some of the things?'

'I think he is careless.'

'Careless—as to what?'

Sheila smiled. 'He is indifferent to good advice. He has been told of trouble among the Maroons, that they mean to rise; he has been advised to make preparations, and he makes none, and he is deceived by a show of loyalty on the part of the slaves. Lord Mallow, if the free Maroons rise, why should not the black slaves rise at the same time? Why do you not act?'

'Is everybody whose good opinion is worth having mad?' answered the governor. 'I have sent my inspectors to Trelawny. I have had reports from them. I have used every care—what would you have me do?'

'Used every care? Why don't you ensure the Maroons peaceableness by advancing on them? Why don't you take them prisoners? They are enraged that two of their herdsmen should be whipped by a negro-slave under the order of one of your captains. They are angry and disturbed and have ambushed the roads to Trelawny, so I'm told.'

'Did Mr. Calhoun tell you that when he was here?'

'It was not that which Mr. Calhoun told me the only time he came here. But who Erris Boyne was. I never knew till, in his honour, he told me, coming here for that purpose. I never knew who my father was till he told me. My mother had kept it from me all my life.'

The governor looked alert. 'And you have not seen him since that day?'

'I have seen him, but I have not spoken to him. It was in the distance only.'

'I understand your manager, Mr. Boland, sees him.'

'My manager does not share my private interests—or troubles. He is free to go where he will, to speak to whom he chooses. He visits Enniskillen, I suppose—it is a well-managed plantation on Jamaican lines, and its owner is a man of mark.'

Sheila spoke without agitation of any kind; her face was firm and calm, her manner composed, her voice even. As she talked, she seemed to be probing the centre of a flower which she had caught from a basket at the window, and her whole personality was alight and vivifying, her good temper and spirit complete. As he looked at her, he had an overmastering desire to make her his own—his wife. She was worth hundreds of thousands of pounds; she had beauty, ability and authority. She was the acme of charm and good bearing. With her he could climb high on the ladder of life. He might be a really great figure in the British world—if she gave her will to help him, to hold up his hands. It had never occurred to him that Dyck Calhoun could be a rival, till he had heard of Dyck's visit to Sheila and her mother, till he had heard Sheila praise him at the first dinner he had given to the two ladies on Christmas Day.

On that day it was clear Sheila did not know who her father was; but stranger things had happened than that she should take up with, and even marry, a man imprisoned for killing another, even one who had been condemned as a mutineer, and had won freedom by saving the king's navy. But now that Sheila knew the truth there could be no danger! Dyck Calhoun would be relegated to his proper place in the scheme of things. Who was there to stand between him and his desire? What was there to stay the great event? He himself was a peer and high-placed, for it was a time when the West Indian Islands were a centre of the world's fighting, where men like Rodney had made everlasting fame; where the currents of world-controversy challenged, met and fought for control.

The West Indies was as much a cock-pit of the fighting powers as ever Belgium was; and in those islands there was wealth and the power which wealth buys; the clash of white and black and coloured peoples; the naval contests on the sea; the horrible massacres and enslavement of free white peoples, as in St. Domingo and Grenada; the dominating attacks of people fighting for control—peoples of old empires like France and Spain, and new empires like that of Britain. These were a centre of colonial life as important as had been the life in Virginia and New York and the New England States and Canada—indeed, more important than Canada in one sense, for the West Indies brought wealth to the British

Isles, and had a big export trade. He lost no time in bringing matters to an issue.

He got to his feet and came near to her. His eyes were inflamed with passion, his manner was impressive. He had a distinguished face, become more distinguished since his assumption of governorship, and authority had increased his personality.

'A man of mark!' he said. 'You mean a marked man. Let me tell you I have an order from the British Government to confine him to his estate; not to permit him to leave it; and, if he does, to arrest him. That is my commanded duty. You approve, do you not? Or are you like most women, soft at heart to bold criminals?'

Sheila did not reply at once. The news was no news to her, for Darius Boland had told her; but she thought it well to let the governor think he had made a new, sensational statement.

'No,' she said at last, looking him calmly in the eyes. 'I have no soft feelings for criminals as criminals, none at all. And there is every reason why I should be adamant to this man, Dyck Calhoun. But, Lord Mallow, I would go carefully about this, if I were you. He is a man who takes no heed of people, high or low, and has no fear of consequences. Have you thought of the consequences to yourself? Suppose he resists, what will you do?'

'If he resists I will attack him with due force.'

'You mean you will send your military and police to attack him?' The gibe was covered, but it found the governor's breast. He knew what she was meaning.

'You would not expect me to do police work, would you? Is that what your president does? What your great George Washington does? Does he make the state arrests with his own hand?'

'I have no doubt he would if the circumstances were such as to warrant it. He has no small vices, and no false feelings. He has proved himself,' she answered boldly.

'Well, in that case,' responded Lord Mallow irritably, 'the event will be as is due. The man is condemned by my masters, and he must submit to my authority. He is twice a criminal, and——'

'And yet a hero and a good swordsman, and as honest as men are made in a dishonest world. Your Admiralty and your Government first pardoned the man, and then gave him freedom on the island which you tried to prevent; and now they turn round and confine him to his acres. Is that pardon in a real sense? Did you write to the Government and say he ought not to be free to roam, lest he should discover more treasure-chests and buy another estate? Was it you?'

The governor shook his head. 'No, not I. I told the Government in careful and unrhetorical language the incident of his coming here, and what I did, and my reasons for doing it—that was all.'

'And you being governor they took your advice. See, my lord, if this thing is done to him it will be to your own discomfiture. It will hurt you in the public service.'

'Why, to hear you speak, mistress, it would almost seem you had a fondness for the man who killed your father, who went to jail for it, and——'

'And became a mutineer,' intervened the girl flushing. 'Why not say all? Why not catalogue his offences? Fondness for the man who killed my father, you say! Yes, I had a deep and sincere fondness for him ever since I met him at Playmore over seven years ago. Yes, a fondness which only his crime makes impossible. But in all that really matters I am still his friend. He did not know he was killing my father, who had no claims upon me, none at all, except that through him I have life and being; but it is enough to separate us for ever in the eyes of the world, and in my eyes. Not morally, of course, but legally and actually. He and I are as far apart as winter and summer; we are parted for ever and ever and ever.'

Now at last she was inflamed. Every nerve in her was alive. All she had ever felt for Dyck Calhoun came rushing to the surface, demanding recognition, reasserting itself. As she used the words, 'ever and ever and ever,' it was like a Cordelia bidding farewell to Lear, her father, for ever, for there was that in her voice which said, 'It is final separation, it is the judgment of Jehovah, and I must submit. It is the last word.'

Lord Mallow saw his opportunity, and did not hesitate. 'No, you are wrong, wholly wrong,' he said. 'I did not bias what I said in my report—a report I was bound to make—by any covert prejudice against Mr. Calhoun. I guarded myself especially'—there he lied, but he was an incomparable liar—'lest it should be used against him. It would appear, however, that the new admiral's report with mine were laid together, and the Government came to its conclusion accordingly. So I am bound to do my duty.'

'If you—oh, if you did your duty, you would not obey the command of the Government. Are there not times when to obey is a crime, and is not this one of them? Lord Mallow, you would be doing as great a crime as Mr. Dyck Calhoun ever committed, or could commit, if you put this order into actual fact. You are governor here, and your judgment would be accepted—remember it is an eight weeks' journey to London at the least, and what might not happen in that time! Are you not given discretion?'

The governor nodded. 'Yes, I am given discretion, but this is an order.'

'An order!' she commented. 'Then if it should not be fulfilled, break it and take the consequences. The principle should be—Do what is right, and have no fear.'

'I will think it over,' answered the governor. 'What you say has immense weight with me—more even than I have words to say. Yes, I will think it over—I promise you. You are a genius—you prevail.'

Her face softened, a new something came into her manner. 'You do truly mean it?' she asked with lips that almost trembled.

It seemed to her that to do this thing for Dyck Calhoun was the least that was possible, and it was perhaps the last thing she might ever be able to do. She realized how terrible it would be for him to be shorn of the liberty he had always had; how dangerous it might be in many ways; and how the people of the island might become excited by it—and troublesome.

'Yes, I mean it,' answered Lord Mallow. 'I mean it exactly as I say it.'

She smiled. 'Well, that should be your recommendation for promotion,' she said happily. 'I am sure you will decide not to enforce the order, if you think about it. You shall be promoted, your honour, to a better place,' she repeated, half-satirically.

'Shall I then?' he asked with a warm smile and drawing close to her. 'Shall I? Then it can only be by your recommendation. Ah, my dear, my beautiful dear one,' he hastened to add, 'my life is possible henceforward only through you. You have taught me by your life and person, by your beauty and truth, by your nobility of mind and character how life should be lived. I have not always deserved your good opinion nor that of others. I have fought duels and killed men; I have aspired to place; I have connived at appointment; I have been vain, overbearing and insistent on my rights or privileges; I have played the dictator here in Jamaica; I have not been satisfied save to get my own way; but you have altered all that. Your coming here has given me a new outlook. Sheila, you have changed me, and you can change me infinitely more. I who have been a master wish to become your slave. I want you—beloved, I want you for my wife.'

He reached out as though to take her hand, but she drew back from him. His thrilling words had touched her, as she had seldom been touched, as she had never been touched by any one save the man that must never be hers; she was submerged for the moment in the flood of his eloquence, and his yielding to her on the point of Dyck's imprisonment gave fresh accent to his words. Yet she could not, she dared not yet say yes to his demand.

'My lord,' she said, 'oh, you have stirred me! Yet I dare not reply to you as you wish. Life is hard as it is, and you have suddenly made it harder. What is more, I do not, I cannot, believe you. You have loved many. Your life has been a covert menace. Oh, I know what they said of you in Ireland. I know not of your life here. I suppose it is circumspect now;

but in Ireland it was declared you were notorious with women.'

'It is a lie,' he answered. 'I was not notorious. I was no better and no worse than many another man. I played, I danced attendance, I said soft nothings, but I was tied to no woman in all Ireland. I was frolicsome and adventurous, but no more. There is no woman who can say I used her ill or took from her what I did not——'

'Atone for, Lord Mallow?'

'Atone—no. What I did not give compensation for, was what I was going to say.'

The situation was intense. She was in a place from which there was no escape except by flight or refusal. She did not really wish to refuse. Somehow, there had come upon her the desire to put all thought of Dyck Calhoun out of her mind by making it impossible for her to think of him; and marriage was the one sure and complete way—marriage with this man, was it possible? He held high position, he was her fellow countryman and an Irish peer, and she was the daughter of an evil man, who was, above all else, a traitor to his country, though Lord Mallow did not know that. The only one she knew possessed of the facts was the man she desired to save herself from in final way—Dyck Calhoun. Her heart was for the moment soft to Lord Mallow, in spite of his hatred of Dyck Calhoun. The governor was a man of charm in conversation. He was born with rare faculties. Besides, he had knowledge of humanity and of women. He knew how women could be touched. He had appealed to Sheila more by ability than by aught else. His concessions to her were discretion in a way. They opened the route to her affections, as his place and title could not do.

'No, no, no, believe me, Sheila, I was a man who had too many temptations—that was all. But I did not spoil my life by them, and I am here a trusted servant of the Government. I am a better governor than your first words to me would make you seem to think.'

Her eyes were shining, her face was troubled, her tongue was silent. She knew not what to say. She felt she could not say yes—yet she wanted to escape from him. Her good fortune did not desert her. Suddenly the door of the room opened and her mother entered.

'There is a member of your suite here, your honour, asking for you. It is of most grave importance. It is urgent. What shall I say?'

'Say nothing. I am coming,' said the governor. I am coming now.'

Chapter XX Out of the Hands of the Philistines

THAT night the Maroons broke loose upon Jamaica, and began murder and depredation against which the governor's activities were no check. Estates were invaded, and men, women and children killed, or carried into the mountains and held as hostages. In the middle and western part of the island the ruinous movements went on without being stayed ; planters and people generally railed at the governor, and said that through his neglect these dark things were happening. It was said he had failed to punish offences by the Maroons, and this had given them confidence, filling them with contempt and disdain. They had one advantage not possessed by the government troops and militia—they were masters of every square rod of land in the middle and west of the island. Their plan was to raid, to ambush, to kill without mercy and to excite the slaves to rebel.

The first assault and repulse took place not far from Enniskillen, Dyck Calhoun's plantation, and Michael Clones captured a Maroon who was slightly wounded.

Michael challenged him thus : 'Come now, my blitherin' friend, tell us what's your trouble—why are you risin' ? What's your grievance ? You don't do this without cause—what's the cause ? '

The black man, naked except for a cloth about his loins, and with a small bag at his hip, slung from a cord over his shoulder, showed his teeth in a stark grimace.

'You're a new-comer here, massa, or you'd know we're treated bad,' he answered. 'We're robbed and trod on and there's no good word kept with us. We asked the governor for more land and he moved us off. We warned him against having one of our head young men flogged by a slave in the presence of slaves—for we are free men, and he laughed at us. So, knowing a few strong men can bring many weak men to their knees, we rose. I say this—there's plenty weak men in Jamaica, men who don't know right when they see it, and no dash to follow it. So we rose, massa, and we'll make Jamaica sick before we've done. They can't conquer us, for we can hide and ambush here, and shoot those that come after us. We hide, one behind this rock and one behind that, never more than two or three together, and we're safe. But the white soldiers come all together and beat drums and blow horns, and we know where they are, and so we catch 'em and kill 'em. You'll see, we'll capture captains and generals, and we'll cut their heads off and bury them in their own guts.'

He made an ugly grimace, and a loathsome gesture, and Michael Clones felt the man ought to die. He half drew his sword, but, thinking better of it, he took the Maroon to the Castle and locked him up in a slave's hut, having first bound him and put him in the charge of one he could trust. But as he put the man away, he said:

'You talk of your people being able to hide, and men not being able to find you; but did you never hear of bloodhounds, that can smell you and hunt you down, and chew you up? Did you never hear of them?'

The man's face wrinkled like a rag, for there is one thing the native fears more than all else, and that is the tooth of the hound. But he gathered courage, and said: 'The governor has no hounds. There ain't none in Jamaica. We know dat—all of us know dat—all of us know dat, massa.'

Michael Clones laughed, and it was not pleasant to hear. 'It may be the governor has no bloodhounds, and would not consent to their being brought into the island, but my master is bringing in hounds himself—a lot with their drivers from Cuba, and your Maroons will have all they can do to hide. Sure, d'ye think every wan in the island is as foolish as the governor? If you do, y'are mistaken, and that's all there is to say.'

'The hounds not here—in de island, massa!' declared the Maroon questioningly.

'Mebbe not, Sambo, but they'll be here within the next few hours, and then where will you and your pals be? You'll be caught between sharp teeth—nice, red, sharp, bloody teeth; and you'll make good steak—better than your best olio, my Sambo.'

The native gave a moan—it was the lament of one whose crime was come *tête-à-tête* with its own punishment.

'That's the game to play,' said Michael to himself as he fastened the door tight on the man. 'The hounds will settle this fool-rebellion quicker than aught else. Mr. Calhoun's a wise man, and he ought to be governor here. Criminal? As much as the angel Gabriel! He must put down this rebellion—no wan else can. They're stronger, the Maroons, than ever they've been. They've planned this with skill, and they'll need a lot of handlin'. We're safe enough here, but down there at Salem—well, they may be caught in the bloody net, for this thing is a dirty black business. Bedad, that's sure.'

A few moments afterwards he met Dyck Calhoun.

'Michael,' said Dyck, 'things are safe enough here, but we've prepared! The overseers, book-keepers and drivers are loyal enough. But there are others not so safe or well prepared. I'm going to Salem—riding as hard as I can, with six of our best men. They're not so daft at Salem as we are, Michael. They won't know how to act or what to do. Darius Boland is a good man, but he's only had Virginian experience, and this is different. A hundred Maroons are as good as a thousand white soldiers in the way the Maroons fight. There are a thousand of them, and they can lay waste this island, if they get going. So I propose to stop them. The hounds are only just outside the harbour, Michael. The ship *Vincent*, bringing them, was sighted by a sloop two days ago, making slowly for Kingston. She should be here before we've time to turn round. Michael, the game is in our hands, if we play it well. Do you go down to Kingston and——'

He detailed what Michael was to do on landing the hounds, and laid out plans for the immediate future.

'They're in danger at Salem, Michael, so we must help them one way or another. I think the hounds will settle this whole wretched business, though.'

Michael told him of his prisoner, and what effect the statement about the hounds had had. A look of purpose came into Dyck's face.

'Michael, there is no other way. A hound is as fair as a gun, and hounds shall be used here in Jamaica. The governor can't refuse their landing now. The people would kill him if he did. It was I proposed it all.'

'Look, sir—who's that?' asked Michael, as they saw a figure riding under the palms not far away.

It was very early morning, and the light was dim yet, but there was sufficient to make even far sight easy. Dyck shaded his forehead with his hand.

'It's not one of our people, Michael. It's a stranger.'

As the rider came on he was stopped by two of the drivers of the estate. Dyck and Michael saw him hold up a letter, and a moment later he was on his way to Dyck, galloping hard. Arrived, he dropped to the ground, and saluted Dyck.

'A letter from Salem, sir,' he said, and handed it over to Dyck.

Dyck nodded, broke the seal of the letter and read it quickly. Then he nodded again and bade the man eat a hearty breakfast and return with him on one of the Enniskillen horses, as his own would be exhausted.

'We're going down to help protect Salem, my man,' said Dyck.

The man grinned. 'That's good, he answered. 'They knew naught of the rising when I left. But the governor was there yesterday, and he'd protect us.'

'Nonsense, fellow, the governor would go straight to Spanish Town where he belongs, when there is trouble. That much he knows of his duty, I'll say.'

When the man had gone, Dyck turned to his servant. 'Michael,' he said, 'the news in the letter came from Darius Boland. He says the governor told him he had orders from England to confine me here at Enniskillen, and he meant to do it. Well, we'll see how he does it. If he sends his marshals to me, we'll make Gadarene swine of them.'

There was a smile at his lips, but it was contemptuous, and the lines at his forehead told of resolve. 'Michael,' he added, 'we'll hunt Lord Mallow with the hounds of our good fortune, for this war is our war. They can't win it without me, and they shan't. Without the hounds it may be a two years' war—with the hounds it can't go beyond a week or so.'

'If the hounds get here, sir! But if they don't?'

Dyck laid his hand upon the sword at his side. 'If they don't get here, Michael, still the war will be ours, for we understand fighting, and how to do it, and the governor does not. Confine me here, will he? Well, if he does, he'll be a better man than I have ever known him, Michael. No, he'll not confine me here. In a few hours I shall be at Salem, to do what he could not, and would not, do if he could. His love is as deep as water on a roof, no deeper. He'll think first of himself, and afterwards of the owner of Salem or any other. Come, let me show you what I mean to do when once we've got Salem free from danger. Come and have a look at my chart.

Some hours later Dyck Calhoun, with his six horsemen, was within a mile or so of Salem. They had ridden hard in the heat and were tired, but there was high spirit in the men, for they were behind a trusted leader, as they knew full well—a man who ate little, but who did not disdain a bottle of madeira or a glass of brandy, and who made good every step of the way he went—watchful, alert, careful, determined. They trusted him and they cared little what his past had been. Jamaica was not a heaven for the good, but it was a haven for many who had been ill-used elsewhere; where each man, as though he were really in a new world, was judged by his daily actions and not by any history of a hidden or an open past. As they came across country, Dyck always ahead, they saw how he responded to every sign of life in the bush, how he moved always with discretion where ambush seemed possible. They knew how on his own estate he never made mistakes of judgment; that he held the balance carefully, and that his violences, rare and tremendous, were not outbursts of an unregulated nature. 'You can't fool Calhoun,' was a common phrase in the language of Enniskillen, and there were few in the near surrounding country who would not have upheld the truth of it.

Now, to-day, he was almost moodily silent, reserved and watchful. None knew the eddies of life which struggled for mastery in him, nor of his horrible disappointments. None knew of his love for Sheila. Yet all knew that he had killed—or was punished for killing—Erris Boyne. None of them had seen Sheila, but all had heard of her, and the governor's courtship of her, and all wondered why Dyck Calhoun should be doing what clearly the governor should do, if the governor were a real man.

Somehow, in spite of the criminal record with which Dyck Calhoun's life was stained, they had a respect for him they did not have for Lord Mallow. Dyck's life in Jamaica was clean; and his progress as a planter had been free from black spots. He even kept no mistress, and none had ever known him to have to do with women, black, brown or white. He had never gone a-Maying, as the saying was, and his only weakness or fault—if it was a fault—was a fondness for the bottle of good wine which was ever open on his table, and for tobacco in the smoking-leaf. To-day he smoked incessantly and carefully. He threw no loose ends of burning tobacco from cigar or pipe into the loose dry leaves and stiff-cut ground. Yet they knew the small clouds that floated away from his head did not check his observation. That was proved beyond peradventure when they were within sight of the homestead of Salem on an upland well-wooded. It was in apparently happy circumstances, for they could see no commotion about the homestead; they saw men with muskets, evidently keeping guard—yet too openly keeping guard, as they all thought, and so some said to each other.

Presently Dyck reined in his horse, and stretched out a hand to detain them. Each man listened attentively, and watched the wood ahead of them, for it was clear Dyck suspected danger there. For a moment there seemed doubt in Dyck's mind what to do, but when it was up he had decided.

'Ride slow for Salem,' he said. 'It's Maroons there in the bush. They are waiting for night. They won't attack us now. They're in ambush—of that I'm sure. If they want to capture Salem, they'll not give alarm by firing on us, so if we ride on they'll think we haven't sensed them. If they do attack us, we'll know they are in good numbers, for they'll be facing us as well as the garrison of Salem. But keep your muskets ready. Have a drink,' he added, and handed round his horn of liquor. 'If they see us drink, and they will, they'll think we've only stopped to refresh, and we'll be safe. In any case, if they attack, fire your muskets at them and ride like the devil. Don't dismount and don't try to find them in the rocks. It's no good. They'll catch us that way, as they've caught others in the past. It's a poor game fighting hidden men. You see, I want to get them into the open down below, and that's where they'll be before we're many hours older.'

With this he rode on slightly ahead, and presently put his horse at a gentle canter which he did not increase as they neared the place where the black men ambushed. Every man of the group behaved well. None showed nervousness, even when one of the horses, conscious of hidden Maroons in the wood, gave a snort and made a sharp movement out of the track, in an attempt to get greater speed.

That was only for an instant, however. Yet every man's heart beat faster as they came to the place where evidently the ambush was. Indeed, Dyck saw a bush move, and had a swift glimpse of a black, hideous face which quickly disappeared, however. After they had passed the spot of danger there was a cry almost from the lips of all save Dyck; but his imperturbable coolness kept them steady. They even gossiped of idle things loud enough for the hidden Maroons to hear. Though every heart beat harder, no face showed suspicion or alarm, as they passed, while all felt the presence of many men in the underbrush. Only when they had absolutely passed the place, did they realize the fulness of the danger through which they had gone. Dyck talked to them presently without turning round, for to do that might have roused suspicion, and while they were out of danger now, there was the future and Dyck's plan which he now unfolded.

'They'll come down into the open before it's dark,' he said quietly, 'and when they do that, we'll have 'em. They've no chance to ambush in the cane-fields now. We'll get them in the open, and wipe them out. Don't look round. Keep steady, and we'll ride a little more quickly soon.'

A little later they cantered gently to the front door of the Salem homestead.

The first face they saw there was that of Darius Boland. It had a look of trouble. Dyck explained. 'We thought you might not have heard of the rise of the Maroons. We have no ladies at Enniskillen. We prepared for the revolt, and we're safe enough there, as things are. Your ladies must go at once to Spanish Town, unless——'

'Unless they stay here! Well, they would not be unwise, for though the slaves under the old management might have joined the Maroons, they will not do so now. We have got them that far. But, Mr. Calhoun, the ladies aren't here. They rode away into the hills this morning, and they've not come back. I was just about sending a search party for them. I did not know of the rise of the Maroons.'

'In what direction did they go?' asked Dyck with anxiety, though his tone was even.

Darius Boland pointed. 'They went slightly northwest, and if they go as I think they meant to do, they would come back the way you came in.'

'They were armed?' Dyck asked sharply, for thought of the ladies arriving by the route he came by made him fearful.

'Yes, they were armed,' was the reply. 'Miss Llyn had a small pistol. She learned to carry one in Virginia, and she has done so ever since we came here.'

'Listen, Boland,' said Dyck with some alarm. 'Up there in the hills by which we came are Maroons hidden, and they will invade this place to-night. We were ready to fight them, of course, as we came, but it's a risky business, and we wanted to get them all if possible. It wouldn't have been possible if we had charged them there, for they were well-ambushed. My idea was to let them get into the open between there and here, and catch them as they came. It would save our own men, and it would probably do for them. If Mrs. and Miss Llyn come back that way, they will be in much greater danger than we were, for the Maroons were coming here to capture the ladies and hold them as hostages; and they would not let them pass, as they did us. In any case, the risk is immense. The ladies must be got to Spanish Town, for the Maroons are desperate. They know we have no ships of the navy here now, and they rely on their raiding powers and the governor's weakness. They have placed their men in every part of the middle and western country, with orders what to do, and they came upon my place last evening and were defeated. Several were killed and one taken prisoner. The trouble is they can't be marched upon like an army. Their powers of ambush are too great. They must be run down by bloodhounds. It's the only way.'

'Bloodhounds—there are no bloodhounds here!' said Darius Boland. 'And if there were, wouldn't pious England make a fuss?'

Dyck Calhoun was about to speak sharply, but he caught a glint of sarcasm in Darius Boland's face, and he said: 'I have the bloodhounds. They're outside the harbour now, and as soon as they're landed I intend to use them.'

'If the governor allows you!' remarked Darius Boland sarcastically. 'He does not like you or your bloodhounds. He has his orders, so he says.'

Dyck made an impatient gesture. 'I will not submit to his order. I have earned my place in this island, and I will see he does not have his way. . . . But we must wait no longer. The ladies must be brought to Spanish Town, and placed where the governor's men can protect them.'

'The governor's men! Protect them! They might as well stay here; we can surely protect them.'

Dyck Calhoun looked round. 'Perhaps, for you have skill, Boland, and you are cautious, but I put it to you, is it fair for ladies to stay in this isolated spot while there are murderers about? Therefore, when the ladies come back, they must be sent without delay to Spanish Town. Can't you see?'

Darius Boland bowed. 'What you say goes always,' he remarked, ' but tell me, sir, who will take the ladies to Spanish Town ? '

Dyck Calhoun frowned. He read the inner meaning of Darius Boland's words. They did not put him out of self-control, however. It was not a time to dwell on such things. It was his primary duty to save the ladies.

' Come, Boland,' he said sharply, ' I shall start now. Wherever the ladies are, we must find them. What sort of a country is it through which they pass over there ? ' He pointed.

' Bad enough in some ways. There's an old monastery of the days of the Spaniards up there '—he pointed —' or the ruins of one, and it is a pleasant place to rest. I doubt not they rested there, if——'

' If they reached it ! ' remarked Dyck with crisp inflection. ' Yes, they would rest there—and it would be a good place for ambush by the Maroons, eh ? '

' Good enough from the standpoint of the Maroons,' he replied, his voice slightly choked.

' Then we must go there. It's a damnable predicament—no, you must not come with me ! You must keep command here.' .

He hastily described the course to be followed by those of his own men who remained to defend, and then said : ' Our horses are fagged. If you can loan us four I'll see they are well taken care of, and are returned, in kind or cash. I'll take three of my men only, and loan you three of the best. We'll fill our knapsacks and get away, Boland.'

A few moments later, Dyck Calhoun and his three companions, with a guide added by Boland, had started away up the road which had been ridden by Mrs. Llyn and Sheila. One thing was clear, the Maroons on the hill did not know of the absence of Sheila and her mother, or they would not be waiting. He did not like the long absence of the ladies. It was ominous at such a time.

Dyck and his small escort got away by a road unseen from where the Maroons were, and when well away put their horses to a canter and got into the hills. Once in the woods, however, they rode alertly, and Dyck's eyes were everywhere. He was quick to see a bush move, to observe the flick of a branch, to catch the faintest sound of an animal origin. He was obsessed with anxiety, for he had a dark fear that some ill had happened to the two. His blood almost dried in his veins when he thought of the fate which had followed the capture of ladies in other islands like Haiti or Grenada. His soul revolted at it.

It did not seem possible that these beautiful and devoted women should have fallen into the outrageous hands of savages. He vexed his soul with torturing thoughts. He knew the girl was armed, and that before harm might come to her she would end her own life and her mother's also ; but suppose she was caught from behind, and that the opportunity of suicide should not be hers—what then ?

Yet he showed no agitation to his followers. His eyes were, however, intensely busy, and every nerve was keen to feel. Life in the open had developed in him the physical astuteness of the wild man, and he had all the gifts that make a supreme open-air fighter. He sensed things ; but with him it was feeling, and not scent or hearing ; his senses were such perfect listeners. He had the intense perception of a delicate plant, those wonderful warnings which only come to those who live close to nature, who study from feeling the thousand moods and tenses of living vegetables and animal life. He was a born hunter, and it was not easy to surprise him when every nerve was aching with premonition. He saw the marks of the hoofs of Sheila's and her mother's horses in the road, knowing them by the freshness of the indentations. An hour, two hours passed, and they then approached the monasterial ruin of which Boland had spoken. Here, suddenly, Dyck dropped to the ground, for he saw unmistakable signs of fright or flurry in the hoof-marks.

He quickly made examination, and there were signs of women's feet and also a bare native foot, but no signs of struggle or disturbance. The footprints, both native and white, were firmly placed, but the horses' hoof-prints showed agitation. Presently the hoof-marks became more composed again. Suddenly one of Dyck's supporters exclaimed he had picked up a small piece of ribbon, evidently dropped to guide those who might come searching. Presently another token was found in a loose bit of buckle from a shoe. Then, suddenly, upon the middle of the road was a little pool of blood and signs that a body had lain in the dust.

'She shot a native here,' said Dyck to his companions morosely, yet coolly.

'There are no signs of a struggle,' remarked the most observant.

'Well, we must go carefully here, for they may have been imprisoned in the ruin. You stay here, and I'll go forward,' he added, with a hand on his sword. 'I've got an idea they're here. We have one chance, my lads, and let's keep our heads. If anything should happen to me, have a try yourselves, and see what you can do. The ladies must be freed, if they're there. There's not one of you that won't stand by to the last, but I want your oath upon it. By the heads or graves of your mothers, lads, you'll see it through ? Up with your hands ! '

Their hands went up. ' By our mothers' heads or graves ! ' they said in low tones.

' Good ! ' he replied. ' I'll go on ahead. If you hear a call, or a shot fired, come forward swiftly.'

An instant later he plunged into the woods to the right of the road, by which he would come upon the ruins from the rear. He held a pistol as he stole carefully yet quickly forward. He was anxious there should be no delay, but he was equally anxious not to be rash. At last without meeting anyone he came near to the ruins. They showed serene in the shade of the trees.

Then suddenly he saw come from the ruin a Maroon of fierce, yet not cruel appearance, who laid a hand behind his ear, and looked steadfastly towards that part of the wood where Dyck was. It was clear he had heard something. Dyck did not know how many Maroons there might be in the ruins, or near it, and he did not attack. It was essential that he find out the strength of his foe ; and he remained quiet. Presently the native turned as though to go back into the ruins, but changed his mind, and began to make a tour of the stony, ruined building. Dyck waited, and presently he saw more natives come from the ruins, and after a moment another three. These last were having an argument of some stress, for they pulled at each others' arms and legs and even caught at the long cloths of the head-dresses they wore.

' They've got the ladies there,' thought Dyck, ' but they've done them no harm yet.' He waited some moments longer to see if more natives were coming out, then said to himself : ' I'll make a try for it now. It won't do to run the risk of going back to bring my fellows up. It's a fair risk, but it's worth taking.'

With that he ran softly forward to the entrance of the ruins from which he had seen the men emerge. Looking in he saw only darkness. Then suddenly he gave a soft call, the call of an Irish bird-note which all people in Ireland—in the west and south of Ireland—know. If Sheila was alive and in the place she would answer it, he was sure. He waited a moment, and there was no answer. Then he called again, and in an instant, as though from a great distance, there came the reply of the same note, clearer and more bell-like than his own.

'She's there!' he said, and boldly entered the place.

It was dark and damp, but ahead was a break in the solid monotony of ruined wall, and he saw a clear stream of light beyond. He stole ahead, got over the stone obstructions, and came on to a biggish room which once had been a refectory. Looking round it he saw three doors—one evidently led into the kitchen, one into a pantry, and one into a hall. It was clear the women were alone, or some one would have come in answer to his call. Who could tell when they would come? There was no time to be lost. With an instinct, which proved correct, he opened the door leading into the old kitchen, and there, tied, and with pale faces, but in no other sense disordered, were Sheila and her mother. He put his fingers to his lips, then hastily cut them loose from the ropes of bamboo, and helped them to their feet.

'Can you walk?' he whispered to Mrs. Llyn. She nodded assent, and braced herself. 'Then here,' he said, 'is a pistol. Come quickly. We may have to fight our way out. Don't be afraid to fire, but take good aim first. I have some men in the wood beyond where you shot the native,' he added to Sheila.

'They'll come at once if I call, or a shot is fired. Keep your heads, and we shall be all right. They're a dangerous crew, but we'll beat them this time, I think. Come as quickly as you can.'

Presently they were in the refectory, and a moment after that they were over the stones, and near the entrance of the ruins, and then a native appeared, armed and running in. Without an instant's hesitation Dyck ran forward, and as he entered, put his sword into the man's vitals, and he fell, calling out as he fell.

'The rest will be on us now,' said Dyck, 'and we must keep going.'

He was about to issue from the place when three more natives appeared, and he shot two without waiting. Catching a pistol from Sheila he aimed at the third native and wounded him, but did not kill him. The man ran into the wood surrounding the monastery. Presently more Maroons came—a dozen or more, and rushed for the entrance. They were met by Dyck's fire, and now also Sheila fired and brought down her man. Dyck fired again and wounded another, and in great skill loaded again, but at that moment three of the Maroons, in a whirlwind of rage, rushed down into the ruins.

It was dark and they were astonished to see that Dyck was there, and they were more astonished to receive—first one and then another—his iron in their bowels. The third man made a stroke at Dyck with his lance, and did no more than gash Dyck's left arm. Then he turned and fled out into the open, and was met by a half-dozen others. They all were about to rush the entrance when suddenly four shots behind them brought three of them down, and the rest fled into the wood shouting. In another moment Dyck and the ladies were in the open, and making for the woods, the women in front, the men behind, loading their muskets as they ran, and alive to the risks of the moment.

The dresses of the ladies were stained and soiled with dust and damp, but otherwise they seemed little the worse for the adventure, save that Mrs. Llyn was shaken, and her face was ashen grey.

'How did you know where we were, and why did you come ?' she said, after they had mounted and had got under way, having secured the horses which Sheila and her mother had ridden.

Briefly Dyck explained how as soon as he had dealt with the revolt of the Maroons at his own place he came straight to Salem to protect her and Sheila.

'I knew you were unused to the ways of the country and to our sort of native here, and I felt sure you would not refuse to take help—even mine at a pinch. But tell me, what happened to you ?' he added, turning to Sheila.

Sheila was distressed at seeing him, for it was only yesterday she had determined to cut him wholly out of her life by assenting to marry Lord Mallow. Yet here he was, and she could scarcely bear to look into his face. He was shut off from her by every fact of human reason. These were days when family feeling was deeper, when the traditions of family life were more intense than now ; when to kill one's own father was not so bad as to embrace, as it were, him or her who had killed that father. Sheila felt if she were normal she ought to feel abhorrence against Dyck ; yet she felt none at all, and his saving them had given a new colour to their relations. If he had killed her father, the traitor, he had saved themselves from death or freed them from a shameful captivity which might have ended in black disaster.

She was distressed, but she kept herself in hand, and did not show confusion. She was well-poised, carried herself with courage.

'We had not heard of the rising of the Maroons,' she said. 'The governor was at Salem yesterday and a message came from his staff to say he was needed to deal with a critical incident, and would he come at once. His staff were not at Salem, but at the next plantation nearer to Spanish Town. Lord Mallow went. If he suspected the real trouble he said naught to us, but was gone before you could realize it. The hours went by, night came and passed, then my mother and I, this morning, made up our minds to take a ride to the monastery, and then round by the road you travelled by back to Salem.'

'There are Maroons now on that hill above your place. They were there in ambush when we passed to-day, but we took no notice. It was not wise of us to invite trouble. Some of us would have been killed, but——'

He then told what had been in his mind, and what he thought might be the outcome—the killing or capture of the whole group, and safety for all at Salem. His words went to the farthest corners of Sheila's nature.

When he had finished, she continued her story. 'We rode for an hour unchallenged, and then came the Maroons. At first I knew not what to do. We were surrounded before we could act. I had my pistol ready, and there was the chance of escape—the faint chance—if we drove our horses on; but there was also the danger of being fired at, and who could tell what a terrible end might have been to the event! So we sat still on our horses, and I asked them how they dared to assault white ladies. I asked them if they had never thought what vengeance the governor would take. They did not understand my words, but they grasped the meaning, and one of them, the leader, who understood English, was inclined to have reason. As it was, we stopped what might have been our murder by saying it would be wiser to hold us as hostages, and that we were Americans. That man was killed—by you. A shot from your pistol brought him down as he rushed forward to enter the ruins. But he took care of us as we went forward, and when I shot one of his followers for laying his hand upon me in the saddle—he caught me by the leg under my skirt—he would allow no retaliation. I knew boldness was the safe part to play.

'But in the end we were bound with ropes as you found us, while they waited for more of their people to come, those, no doubt, you found ambushed on the hill. As we lay in the kitchen, bound as you saw us, the leader said to us we should be safe if he could have his way, but there were bad elements among the Maroons, and he could not guarantee it. Yet he knew the Government would pay for our release, would no doubt give the land for which they had asked with no avail. We must, therefore, remain prisoners. If we made no efforts to escape, it would be better for us in the end. "Keep your head steady, missy, try no tricks, and all may go well; but I have bad lot to control, and they may fly at you." That was the way he spoke. It made our blood run cold, for he was one man, with fair mind, and he had around him men, savage and irresponsible. Black and ruthless, they would stop at nothing except the sword at their throats or the teeth in their flesh.'

'The teeth in their flesh!' said Dyck with a grim smile. 'Yes, that is the only way with them. Naught can put the fear of God into them except bloodhounds, and that Lord Mallow will not have. He has been set against it until now. But this business will teach him. He may change his mind now, since what he cares for is in danger—his place and his ladies!'

Mrs. Llyn roused herself to say: 'No, no, Mr. Calhoun, you must not say that of him. His place may be in danger, but not his ladies. He has no promise of that. . . . And see, Mr. Calhoun, I want to say that, in any case, you have paid your debt, if you owe one to us. For a life taken you have given two lives—to me and my girl. The account is squared, if it were ever in doubt. Believe me, I speak as one who has a right to say it! Erris Boyne was naught to me, naught at all, but he was my daughter's father, and that made everything difficult. I could make him cease to be my husband, and I did; but I could not make him cease to be her father.'

'I had no love for Erris Boyne,' said Sheila, with an effort, for she felt choked. Misery was heavy on her. 'None at all, but he was my father—and there is nothing more to say.'

'See, all's well still at Salem,' said Dyck waving a hand forward as though to change the talk. 'All's as we left it.'

There in the near distance lay Salem, serene. All tropical life about seemed throbbing with life and soaking with leisure.

'We were in time,' he added. 'The Maroons are still in ambush. The sun is beginning to set through, and the trouble may begin. We shall get there about sundown—safe, thank God!'

'Safe, thank God—and you,' said Sheila's mother.

Chapter XXI *The Clash of Race*

IN the King's House at Spanish Town the governor was troubled. All his plans and prophecies had come to naught. He had been convinced there would be no rebellion of the Maroons, and he was equally sure that his career would be made hugely successful by marriage with Sheila Llyn—but the Maroons had revolted, the marriage was not settled!

Messages had been coming from the provost-marshal-general of reports from the counties of Middlesex and Cornwall, that the Maroons were ravaging everywhere and that bands of slaves had joined them with serious disasters to the plantation people. Planters, their wives and children had been murdered, and in some districts the natives were in full possession and had destroyed, robbed and ravaged. He had summoned his commander of the militia forces, had created special constables, and armed them, and had sent a ship to the Bahamas to summon a small British fleet there. He had also mapped out a campaign against the Maroons, which had one grave demerit—it was planned on a basis of ordinary warfare and not with Jamaica conditions in mind. The provost-marshal warned him of the futility of these plans, but he had persisted in them. He had later been shocked, however, by news that the best of his colonels had been ambushed and killed, and that others had been made prisoners and treated with barbarity. From everywhere, except one, had come either news of defeat or set-back.

One good thing he immediately did: he threw open King's House to the wounded, and set the surgeons to work, thereby checking bitter criticism and blocking the movement rising against him. For it was well known he had rejected all warnings, had persisted in his view that trust in the Maroons and fair treatment of themselves and the slaves were all that was needed.

As he walked in the great salon or hall of audience where the wounded lay—over seventy feet long and thirty wide, with great height, to which beds and conveniences had been hastily brought—it seemed to him that he was saving, if barely saving, his name and career. Standing beside one of the Doric pillars which divided the salon from an upper and lower gallery of communications, he received the Custos of Kingston. As the Custos told his news the governor's eyes were running along the line of busts of ancient and modern philosophers on the gilt brackets between the Doric pilasters. They were all in bronze, and his mind had the doleful imagination of brown slave heroes placed there in honour for services given to the country. The doors at the south end of the great salon opened now and then into the council chambers beyond, and he could see the surgeons operating on the cases returned from the plantations.

'Your honour,' said the Custos, 'things have suddenly improved. The hounds have come from Cuba and in the charge of ten men—ten men with sixty hounds. That is the situation at the moment. All the people at Kingston are overjoyed. They see the end of the revolt.'

'The hounds!' exclaimed the governor. 'What hounds?'

'The hounds sent for by Dyck Calhoun—surely your honour remembers!'

Surely his honour did, and recalled also that he forbade the importation of the hounds; but he could not press that prohibition now. 'The mutineer and murderer, Dyck Calhoun!' he exclaimed. 'And they have come!'

'Yes, your honour, and gone with Calhoun's man, Michael Clones, to Salem.'

'To Salem—why Salem?'

'Because Calhoun is there fighting the Maroons in that district. The Maroons first captured the ladies of Salem as they rode in the woods. They were beaten at that game by Calhoun and four men; the ladies then were freed and taken back to Salem. Then the storm burst on Salem—burst, but did not overwhelm. Calhoun saved the situation there; and when his hounds arrive at Salem he will range over the whole country. It is against the ideas of the people of England, but it does our work in Jamaica as nothing else could. It was a stroke of genius, the hounds, your honour!'

Lord Mallow was at once relieved and nonplussed. No doubt the policy of the hounds was useful, and it might save his own goose, but it was, in a sense, un-English to hunt the wild man with hounds. Yet was it un-English? What was the difference between a sword and a good sharp tooth save that the sword struck and let go and the tooth struck and held on? It had been said in England that to hunt negroes with hounds was barbarous and cowardly; but criminals were hunted with bloodhounds in all civilized countries; and as for cowardice, the man who had sent for these hounds was as brave as any old crusader! No, Dyck Calhoun could not be charged with cowardice, and his policy of the hounds might save the island and the administration in the end. They had arrived in the very hour of Jamaica's and Lord Mallow's greatest peril. They had gone on to the man who had been sane enough to send for them.

'Tell me about the landing of the hounds,' said Lord Mallow.

'It was last night about dusk that word came from the pilot's station at Port Royal that the vessel *Vincent* was making for port, all sails standing, and that she came from Cuba. Presently Michael Clones, the servant of Dyck Calhoun, came also to say that the *Vincent* was the ship bringing Calhoun's hounds from Cuba, and asking permit for delivery. This he did because he thought you were opposed to the landing. In the light of our position here, we decided to grant the delivery, and it was so done.

'When the vessel came to anchor, the hounds with their drivers were landed. The landing was the signal for a great display on the part of the people and the militia—yes, the militia shared in the applause, your honour! They had had a taste of war with the Maroons and the slaves, and they were well inclined to let the dogs have their chance. Resolutions were then passed to approach your honour and ask that full powers be given to Calhoun to pursue the war to the end without thought of military precedent or of Calhoun's position. He has no official place in the public life here, but he is powerful with the masses. It is rumoured that you have an order to confine him to his plantation; but with your consent, I will say that to apply it would bring revolution in Jamaica. There are great numbers of people who love his courage, what he did for the king's navy, and for his commercial success here, and they would resent harsh treatment of him. They are aware, your honour, that he and you knew each other in Ireland, and they think you are hard on him. People judge not from all the facts, but from what they see and hear. Is not that so, your honour? '

During the Custos' narrative, Lord Mallow was perturbed. He had the common sense to know that Dyck Calhoun, ex-convict and mutineer as he was, had personal power in the island, which he as governor had not been able to get, and Dyck had not abused that power as he might have done. He realized that Dyck's premonition of an outbreak and caution in sending for the hounds was a stroke of genius. He recalled with anger Dyck's appearance, in spite of regulations, in trousers at the king's ball and his dancing with a black woman, and he also realized that it was a cool insult to himself. It was then he had given the home authorities information which would poison their mind against Dyck, and from that had come the order to confine him to his plantation.

Yet he felt the time had come when he might use Dyck for his own purposes. That Dyck should be at Salem was a bitter dose, but that could amount to nothing, for Sheila could never marry the man who had killed her father, however bad and mad her father was. Yet it gravelled his soul that Dyck should be doing service for the lady to whom he had offered his own hand and heart, and from whom he had had no word of assent. It angered him against himself that he had not at once sent soldiers to Salem to protect it. He wished to set himself right with Sheila and with the island people, and how to do so was the question.

First, clearly, he must not think of applying the order to confine Dyck to his plantation; also he must give Dyck authority to use the hounds in hunting down the Maroons and slaves who were committing awful crimes. He forthwith decided to write, asking Dyck to send him an outline of his scheme against the rebels for comment and approval. That he must do, for the game was with Dyck.

'How long will it take the hounds to get to Salem?' he asked the Custos presently in his office, with deep-set lines in his face and a determined look in his eyes. He was an arrogant man, but he was not insane, and he wanted to succeed. It could only be success if he dragged Jamaica out of this rebellion with flying colours, and his one possible weapon was the man whom he had reason to detest.

'Why, your honour, as we sent them by wagons and good horses they should be in Salem and in Dyck Calhoun's hands this evening. If they press they should be there by now almost, for they've been going for hours, and the distance is not great.'

The governor nodded, and began to write. A half-hour later he handed to the Custos what he had written.

'See what you think of that, Custos,' he said. 'Does it, in your mind, cover the ground as it should?'

The Custos read it all over slowly and carefully, weighing every word. Presently he handed back the paper. 'Your honour, it is complete and masterly,' he said. 'It puts the crushing of the revolt into the hands of Mr. Calhoun, and nothing could be wiser. He has the gifts of a leader, and he will do the job with no mistake, and in a time of crisis like this, that is essential. You have given him the right to order the militia to obey him, and nothing could be better. He will organize the business like a master. We haven't forgotten his fight for the navy on the *Ariadne*. Didn't the admiral tell the story at the dinner we gave him of how this ex-convict and mutineer, by sheer genius, broke the power of the French at the critical moment and saved our fleet, though it was only three-fourths that of the French?'

'You don't think the French will get us some day?' asked the governor with a smile.

'I certainly don't since our defences have been improved. Look at the sixty big cannon on Fort Augusta! They'd be knocked to smithereens before they could get into the quiet waters of the harbour. Don't forget the narrows, your honour. Then there's the Apostle's Battery with its huge shot, and the guns of Fort Royal would give them a cross-fire that would make them sick. Besides, we could stop them within the shoals and reefs and narrow channels before they got near the inner circle. It would only be the hand of God that would get them in, and it doesn't work for Frenchmen these days, I observe. No, this place is safe, and King's House will be the home of British governors for many a century.'

'Ah, that's your gallant faith, and no doubt you are right, but go on with your tale of the hounds,' said Lord Mallow.

'Your honour, as the hounds went away with Michael Clones there was greater applause than I have ever seen in the island except when Rodney defeated De Grasse. Imagine a little sloop in the wash of the seas and the buccaneers piling down on him, and no chance of escape, and then a great British battleship appearing, and the situation saved—that was how we were placed here till the hounds arrived. Your honour, this morning's—this early morning's—exit of the hounds was like a procession of veterans to Walhalla. There was the sun breaking over the tops of the hills, a crimsonish, greyish, opaline touch of soft sprays or mists breaking away from the onset of the sunrise; and all the trees with night-lips wet sucking in the sun and drinking up the light like an overseer at a Christmas breakfast; and you know what that is. And all the shore, rocky and sandy, rough and smooth, happy and homely, shimmering in the radiance. And hundreds of creoles and coloured folk beating the ground in agitation, and slaves a-plenty carrying boxes to the ships that are leaving, and white folk crowding the streets, and bugles blowing, and the tramp of the militia, and the rattle of carts on the cobble-stones, and the voices of the officers giving orders, and turmoil everywhere.

'Then, suddenly, the sharp sound of a long whip and a voice calling, and there rises out of the landing place the procession—the sixty dogs in three wagons, their ten drivers with their whips, but keeping order by the sound of their voices, low, soft and peculiar, and then the horses starting into a quick trot which presently would become a canter—and the hounds were off to Salem! There could be no fear with the hounds let loose to do the hunting.'

'But suppose that when they get to Salem their owner is no more.'

The Custos laughed. 'Him, your honour—him no more! Isn't he the man of whom the black folk say, "Lucky buckra—morning, lucky new-comer!" If that's his reputation, and the coming of his hounds just when the island most needed them is good proof of it, do you think he'll be killed by a lot of dirty Maroons! Ah, Calhoun's a man with the luck of the devil, your honour! He has the pull—as sure as heaven's above he'll make success. If you command your staff to have this posted as a proclamation throughout the island, it will do as much good as a thousand soldiers. The military officers will not object, they know how big a man he is, and they have had enough. The news is not good from all over the island, for there are bad planters and bad overseers, and they've poisoned large fields of men in many quarters of the island, and things are wrong.

'But this proclamation will put things right. It will stop the slaves from revolting; it will squelch the Maroons, and I'm certain sure Calhoun will have Maroons ready to fight for us, not against us, before this thing is over. I tell you, your honour, it means the way out—that's what it means. So, if you'll give me your order, keeping a copy of it for the provost-marshal, I'll see it's delivered to Dyck Calhoun before morning—perhaps by midnight. It's not more than a six hours' journey in the ordinary way.'

At that moment an aide-de-camp entered, and with solemn face presented to the governor the last report from the provost-marshal-general. Then he watched the governor read the report.

'Ten more killed and twenty wounded!' said the governor. 'It must be stopped.'

He gave the Custos the letter to Dyck Calhoun, and a few moments later handed the proclamation to his aide-de-camp.

'That will settle the business, your honour,' said the *aide* as he read the proclamation.

Chapter XXII Sheila has Her Say

'THEN, tell me please, what you know of the story,' said the governor to Sheila at King's House one afternoon two weeks later. 'I only get meagre reports from the general commanding. But you being close to the intimate source of the events must know all.'

Sheila shrank at the suggestion in the governor's voice, but she did not resent it. She had purposes which she must carry out, and she steeled herself. She wanted to get from Lord Mallow a pledge concerning Dyck Calhoun, and she must be patient.

'I know nothing direct from Mr. Calhoun, your honour,' she said, 'but only through his servant, Michael Clones, who is a friend of my Darius Boland, and they have met often since the first outbreak. You know, of course, what happened at Port Louise—how the Maroons seized and murdered the garrison, how families were butchered when they armed first, how barbarism broke loose and made all men combine to fight the rebels. Even before Mr. Calhoun came they had had record of a sack of human ears, cut from the dead rebel-slaves, when they had been killed by faithful slaves, and good progress was made. But the revolters fixed their camps on high rocks, and by blowing of shells brought many fresh recruits to the struggle. It was only when Mr. Calhoun came with his hounds that anything decisive was done. For the rebels—Maroons and slaves—were hid, well entrenched and cautious, and the danger was becoming greater every day. On Mr. Calhoun's arrival, he was almost caught in ambush, being misled, and saved himself only by splendid marksmanship. He was attacked by six rebels of whom he killed four, and riding his wounded horse over the other two he escaped. Then he set the hounds to work and the rebellion in that district was soon over.'

'It was gathering strength with increasing tragedy elsewhere,' remarked the governor. 'Some took refuge in hidden places, and came out only to steal, rob and murder—and worse. In one place, after a noted slave, well known for his treachery, had been killed—Khoftet was his name—his head was cut off by slaves friendly to us and his heart roasted and eaten. There is but one way to deal with these people. No gaming or drinking among slaves must be allowed, blowing of shells or beating of drums must be forbidden, and every free negro or mulatto must wear on his arm a sign—perhaps a cross in blue or red.'

'Slavery is doomed,' said Sheila firmly. 'Its end is not far off.'

'Well, they still keep slaves in the land of Washington and Alexander Hamilton. They are better off here at any rate than in their own country, where they were like animals among whom they lived. Here they are safe from poverty, cared for in sickness, and have no fear of being handed over to the keepers of carrion, or being the food of the gallinaso. They can feed their fill on fricasees of macaca worms and steal without punishment teal or ring-tailed pigeons and black crabs from the massa.'

'But they are not free. They are atoms in heaps of dust. They have no rights—no liberties.'

Sheila was agitated, but she showed no excitement. She seemed to Lord Mallow like one who had perfect control of herself, and was not the victim of anticipation. She seemed, save for her dark searching eyes, like one who had gone through experience which had disciplined her to control. Only her hands were demonstrative—yet quietly so. Any one watching her closely would have seen that her hands were sensitive, expressed even more markedly than her eyes or lips what were her feelings. Her tragedy had altered her in one sense. She was paler and thinner than ever she had been, but there was enough of her, and that delicately made, which gave the governor a thrill of desire to make her his own for the rest of his life or hers. He had also gone through much since they had last met, and he had seen his own position in the balance—uncertain, troubled, insecure. He realized that he had lost reputation, which had scarcely been regained by his consent to the use of the hounds and giving Dyck Calhoun a free hand, as temporary head of the militia. He could not put him over the regular troops, but as the general commanding was, in effect, the slave of Dyck Calhoun, there was no need for anxiety.

Dyck Calhoun had smashed the rebellion, had quieted the island, had risen above all the dark disturbances of revolt like a master. He had established barracks and forts at many points in the island, and had stationed troops in them; he had cowed and subdued Maroons and slaves by the hounds. Yet he had punished only the chief of those who had been in actual rebellion, and had repressed the violent punishments of the earlier part of the conflict. He had forbidden any one to be burned alive, and had ordered that no one should be executed without his first judging—with the consent of the governor!—the facts of the case.

Dyck had built up for himself a reputation as no one in all the history of the island had been able to do. He commanded by more than official authority—by personality and achievement. There was no one in the island but knew they had been saved by his prudence, foresight and skill. It was to their minds stupendous and romantic. Fortunately they showed no strong feeling against Lord Mallow. By placing King's House at disposal as a hospital, and by gifts of food and money to wives and children of soldiers and civilians, the governor had a little eradicated his record of neglect.

Lord Mallow had a way with him when he chose to use it. He was not without the gift for popularity, and he saw now that he could best attain it by treating Dyck Calhoun well. He saw troops come and go, he listened to grievances, he corrected abuses, he devised a scheme for nursing, he planned security for the future, he gave permission for buccaneer trading with the United States, he had by legislative order given the creoles a better place in the civic organism. This was a time for broad policy—for distribution of cassavi bread, yams and papaws, for big, and maybe rough, display of power and generosity. He was not blind to the fact that he might by discreet courses impress favourably his visitor. All he did was affected by that thought. He could not but think that Sheila would judge of him by what he did as much as by what he said.

He looked at her now with interest and longing. He loved to hear her talk, and she had information which was no doubt truer than most he received—was closer to the brine, as it were.

'What more can you tell me of Mr. Calhoun and his doings?' he asked presently. 'He is lucky in having so perfect a narrator of his histories—yet so unexpected a narrator.'

A flush stole slowly up Sheila's face, and gave a glow even to the roots of her hair. She could not endure these references to the dark gulf between her and Dyck Calhoun.

'My lord,' she said sharply, 'it is not meet that you should say such things. Mr. Calhoun was jailed for killing my father—let it be at that. The last time you saw me you offered me your hand and heart. Well, do you know I had almost made up my mind to accept your hand, when the news of this trouble was brought to you, and you left us—to ourselves and our dangers!'

The governor started. 'You are as unfriendly as a "terral garamighty," you make me draw my breath thick as the blackamoors, as they say. I did what I thought best in the circumstances,' he said. 'I did not think you would be in any danger. I had not heard of the Maroons being so far south as Salem.'

'Yet it is the man who foresees chances that succeeds, as you should know by now, your honour. I was greatly touched by the offer you made me—indeed, yes,' she added, seeing the rapt eager look in his face. 'I had been told what had upset me, that Dyck Calhoun was guilty of killing my father, and all the world seemed dreadful. Yes, in the reaction, it was almost on my tongue to say yes to you, for you are a good talker, you had skill in much that you did, and with honest advice from a wife might do much more. So I was in a mind to say yes. I had had much to try me, indeed, so very much. Ever since I first saw Dyck Calhoun he had been the one man who had ever influenced me. He was for ever in my mind even when he was in prison—oh, what is prison, what is guilt even to a girl when she loves! Yes, I loved him. There it was. He was ever in my mind, and I came here to Jamaica—he was here—for what else? Salem could have been restored by Darius Boland or others, or I could have sold it. I came to Jamaica to find him here—unwomanly, perhaps, you will say.'

'Unusual only with a genius—like you.'

'Then you do not speak what is in your mind, your honour. You say what you feel is the right thing to say—the slave of circumstances. I will be wholly frank with you. I came here to see Dyck Calhoun, for I knew he would not come to see me. Yes, there it was, a real thing in his heart. If he had been a lesser man than he is, he would have come to America when he was freed from prison. But he did not, would not, come. He knew he had been found guilty of killing my father, and that for him and me there could be no marriage—indeed he never asked me to marry him. Yet I know he would have done so if he could. When I came to know what he was jailed for doing, I felt there was no place for him and me together in the world. Yet my heart kept crying out to him, and I felt there was but one thing left for me to do, and that was to make it impossible for me to think of him even, or for him to think of me. Then you came and offered me your hand. It was a hand most women might have been glad to accept from the standpoint of material things. And you were Irish like myself, and like the boy I loved. I was sick of the robberies of life and time, and I wanted to be out of it all in some secure place. What place so secure from the sorrow that was eating at my heart as marriage! It said no to every stir of feeling that was vexing me, to every show of love or remembrance. So I listened to you. It was not because you were a governor or a peer—no, not that! For even in Virginia I had offers from one higher than yourself—and younger, and a peer also. No, it was not material things that influenced me, but your own intellectual eminence; for you have more brains than most men, as you know so well.'

The governor interrupted her with a gesture and a burst of emotion. 'No, no, I am not so vain as you think. If I were I should have seen at Salem that you meant to say yes.'

'Yet you know well you have gifts, though you have made sad mistakes here. Do not think it was your personality, your looks that induced me to think of you, to listen to you. When Mr. Calhoun told me the truth, and gave me a letter he had written to me——'

'A letter—to you?'

There was surprise in the governor's voice—surprise and chagrin, for the thing had moved him powerfully.

'Yes, a letter to me which he never meant me to have. It was a kind of diary of his heart, and it was written even while I was landing on the island on Christmas Day. It was the most terribly truthful thing, opening his whole soul to the girl whom he had always loved, but from whom he was separated by a thing not the less tragical because it was merely technical. He gave it me to read, and when I read it I saw there was no place for me in the world except a convent or marriage. The convent could not be, for I was no Catholic, and marriage seemed the only thing possible. That day you came I saw only one thing to do—one mad, hopeless thing to do.'

'Mad and hopeless!' burst out Lord Mallow. 'How so? Your very reason shows that it was sane, well founded in the philosophy of the heart.'

He was eager to win her yet, and he did not see the end at which she aimed. He felt he must tell her all the passion and love he felt. But her look gave no encouragement, her eyes were uninviting.

Sheila smiled painfully. 'Yes, mad and hopeless, for be sure of this : we cannot kill in one day the growth of years. I could not cure myself of loving him by marrying you. There had to be some other cure for that. I never knew and never loved my father. But he was my father, and if Mr. Calhoun killed him, I could not marry him. But at last I came to know that your love and affection could not make me forget him—no, never. I realize that now. He and I can never come together, but I owe him so much—I owe him my life, for he saved it ; he must ever have a place in my heart, be to me more than any one else can be. I want you to do something for him.'

'What do you wish ? '

'I want you to have removed from him the sentence of the British Government. I want him to be free to come and go anywhere in the world—to return to England if he wishes it, to be a free man, and not a victim of outlawry. I want that, and you ought to give it to him.'

'Why ? '

Indignation filled her eyes. 'You ask why. He has saved your administration and the island from defeat and horrible loss. He has prevented most of the slaves from revolting, and he conquered the Maroons. The empire is his debtor. Will you do this for one who has done so much for you ? '

Lord Mallow was angry and disconcerted, but he did not show it. 'I can do no more than I have done. I have not confined him to his plantation as the Government commanded ; I cannot go beyond that.'

'You can put his case from the standpoint of a patriot.'

For a moment the governor hesitated, then he said: 'Because you ask me——'

'I want it done for his sake, not for mine,' she returned with decision. 'You owe it to yourself to see that it is done. Gratitude is not dead in you, is it?'

Lord Mallow flushed. 'You press his case too hard. You forget what he is—a mutineer and a murderer, and no one should remember that as you should.'

'He has atoned for both, and you know it well. Besides, he was not a murderer. Even the courts did not say he was. They only said he was guilty of manslaughter. Oh, your honour, be as gallant as your name and place warrant.'

He looked at her for a moment with strange feelings in his heart. Then he said: 'I will give you an answer in twenty-four hours. Will that do, sweet persuader?'

'It might do,' she answered, and, strange to say, she had a sure feeling that he would say yes, in spite of her knowledge that, in his heart of hearts, he hated Calhoun.

As she left the room, Lord Mallow stood for a moment looking after her.

'She loves the rogue in spite of all!' he said bitterly. 'But she must come with me. They are apart as the poles. Yet I shall do as she wishes if I am to win her.'

Chapter XXIII *The Coming of Noreen*

THE next day came a new element in the situation: a ship arrived from England. On it was one who had come to Jamaica to act as governess to two children of the officer commanding the regular troops in the island. She had been ill for a week before nearing Kingston, and when the *Regent* reached the harbour she was in a bad way. The ship's doctor was despondent about her; but he was a second-rate man, and felt that perhaps an island doctor might give her some hope. When she was carried ashore she was at once removed to the home of the general commanding at Spanish Town, and there a local doctor saw her.

'What is her history?' he asked, after he had seen the haggard face of the woman.

The ship's doctor did not know; and the general commanding was in the interior at the head of his troops. There was no wife in the general's house, as he was a widower; and his daughters, of twelve and fourteen, under a faithful old housekeeper, had no knowledge of the woman's life.

When she was taken to the general's house she was in great dejection, and her face had a look of ennui and despair. She was thin and worn, and her eyes only told of the struggle going on between life and death.

'What is her name?' asked the resident doctor.

'Noreen Balfe,' was the reply of the ship's doctor. 'A good old Irish name, though you can see she comes of the lower ranks of life.'

'Married ? '

The ship's doctor pointed to her hand which had a wedding-ring. 'Ah, yes, certainly . . . what hope have you of her ? '

'I don't know what to say. The fever is high. She isn't trying to live ; she's got some mental trouble, I believe But you and I would be of no use in that kind of thing.'

'I don't take to new-fangled ideas of mental cure,' said the ship's doctor. 'Cure the body and the mind will cure itself.'

A cold smile stole to the lips of the resident doctor. Those were days of little scientific medical skill, and no West Indian doctor had knowledge enough to control a discussion of the kind. 'But I'd like to see some one with brains take an interest in her,' he remarked.

'I leave her in your hands,' was the reply. 'I'm a ship's medico, and she's now ashore.'

'It's a pity,' said the resident doctor reflectively, as he watched a servant doing necessary work at the bedside. 'She hasn't long to go as she is, yet I've seen such cases recover.'

As they left the room together they met Sheila and one of the daughters of the house. 'I've come to see the sick woman from the ship, if I may,' Sheila said. 'I've just heard about her, and I'd like to be of use.'

The resident doctor looked at her with admiration. She was the most conspicuous figure in the island, and her beauty was a fine support to her wealth and reputation. It was like her to be kind in this frank way.

'You can be of great use if you will,' he said. 'The fever is not infectious, I'm glad to say. So you need have no fear of being with her—on account of others.'

'I have no fear,' responded Sheila with a friendly smile, 'and I will go to her now—no, if you don't mind, I'd prefer to go alone,' she added as she saw the doctor was coming with her.

The other bowed and nodded approvingly. 'The fewer the better,' he said. 'I think you ought to go in alone—quite alone,' he said with gentle firmness, for he saw the girl with Sheila was also going with her.

So it was that Sheila entered alone, and came to the bed and looked at the woman in the extreme depression of fever. 'Prepare some lime-juice, please,' she said to the servant on the other side of the bed. 'Keep it always beside the bed—I know what these cases are.'

The servant disappeared, and the eyes of the sick woman opened and looked at Sheila. There shot into them a look of horror and relief in one, if such a thing might be. A sudden energy inspired her, and she drew herself up in bed, her face gone ghastly.

'You are Sheila Boyne, aren't you?' she asked in a low half-guttural note.

'I am Sheila Llyn,' was the astonished reply.

'It's the same thing,' came the response. 'You are the daughter of Erris Boyne.'

Sheila turned pale. Who was this woman that knew her and her history?

'What is your name?' she asked—'your real name—what is it?'

'My name is Noreen Balfe; it was Noreen Boyne.'

For a moment Sheila could not get her bearings.

The heavy scent of the flowers coming in at the window almost suffocated her. She seemed to lose a grip of herself. Presently she made an effort at composure. 'Noreen Boyne! You were then the second wife of Erris Boyne?'

'I was his second wife. His first wife was your mother—you are like your mother!' Noreen said in agitation.

The meaning was clear. Sheila laid a sharp hand on herself. 'Don't get excited,' she urged with kindly feeling. 'He is dead and gone.'

'Yes, he is dead and gone.'

For a moment Noreen seemed to fight for mastery of her stark emotion, and Sheila said: 'Lie still. It is all over. He cannot hurt us now.'

The other shook her head in protest. 'I came here to forget, and I find you—his daughter.'

'You find more than his daughter; you find his first wife, and you find the one that killed him.'

'The one that killed him!' said the woman greatly troubled. 'How did you know that?'

'All the world knows it. He was in prison four years, and since then he has been a mutineer, a treasure-hunter, a planter, and a saviour of these islands!'

The sick woman fell back in exhaustion. At that moment the servant entered with a pitcher of lime-juice. Sheila took it from her and motioned her out of the room; then she held a glass of the liquid to the stark lips.

'Drink,' she said in a low kind voice, and she poured slowly into the patient's mouth the cooling draught. A moment later Noreen raised herself up again.

'Mr. Dyck Calhoun is here?' she asked.

'He is here, and none to-day holds so high a place in the minds of all who live here. He has saved the island.'

'All are here that matter,' said Noreen. 'And I came to forget!'

'What do you remember?' asked Sheila.

'I remember all—how he died!'

Suddenly Sheila had a desire to shriek aloud. This woman—did this woman then see Erris Boyne die? Was she present when the deed was done? If so, why was she not called to give evidence at the trial. But yes, she was called to give evidence. She remembered it now, and the evidence had been that she was in her own home when the killing took place.

'How did he die?' she asked in a whisper.

'One stroke did it—only one, and he fell like a log.' She made a motion as of striking, and shuddered, covering her eyes with trembling hands.

'You tell me you saw Dyck Calhoun do this to an undefended man—you tell me this!'

Sheila's anger was justified in her mind. That Dyck Calhoun should——

'I did not see Dyck Calhoun strike him,' gasped the woman. 'I did not say that. Dyck Calhoun did not kill Erris Boyne!'

'My God!—oh, my God!' said Sheila with ashen lips, but a great light breaking in her eyes. 'Dyck Calhoun did not kill Erris Boyne! Then who killed him?'

There was a moment's pause, then—'I killed him,' said the woman in agony. 'I killed him.'

A terrible repugnance seized Sheila. After a moment she said in agitation: 'You killed him—you struck him down! Yet you let an innocent man go to prison, and be kept there for years, and his father go to his grave with shame, with estates ruined and home lost—and you were the guilty one —you—all the time.'

'It was part of my madness. I was a coward and I thought then there were reasons why I should feel no pity for Dyck Calhoun. His father injured mine —oh, badly! But I was a coward, and I've paid the price.'

A kinder feeling now took hold of Sheila. After all, what this woman had done gave happiness into her—Sheila's—hands. It relieved Dyck Calhoun of shame and disgrace. A jail-bird he was still, but an innocent jail-bird. He had not killed Erris Boyne. Besides, it wiped out for ever the barrier between them. All her blind devotion to the man was now justified. His name and fame were clear. Her repugnance of the woman was as nothing beside her splendid feeling of relief. It was as though the gates of hell had been closed and the curtains of heaven drawn for the eyes to see. Six years of horrible shame wiped out, and a new world was before her eyes.

This woman who had killed Erris Boyne must now suffer. She must bear the ignominy which had been heaped upon Dyck Calhoun's head. Yet all at once there came to her mind a softening feeling. Erris Boyne had been rightly killed by a woman he had wronged, for he was a traitor as well as an adulterer —one who could use no woman well, who broke faith with all civilized tradition, and reverted to the savage. Surely the woman's crime was not a dark one: it was injured innocence smiting depravity, tyranny and lust.

Suddenly, as she looked at the woman who had done this thing, she, whose hand had rid the world of a traitor and a beast, fell back on the pillow in a faint. With an exclamation Sheila lifted up the head. If the woman was dead, then there was no hope for Dyck Calhoun; any story that she—Sheila—might tell would be of no use. Yet she was no longer agitated in her body. Hands and fingers were steady, and she felt for the heart with firm fingers. Yes, the heart was still beating, and the pulse was slightly drumming. Thank God, the woman was alive! She rang a bell and lifted up the head of the sick woman.

A moment later the servant was in the room. Sheila gave her orders quickly, and snatched up a pencil from the table. Then, on a piece of paper, she wrote the words: 'I, not Dyck Calhoun, killed Erris Boyne.'

A few moments later, Noreen's eyes opened, and Sheila spoke to her. 'I have written these words. Here they are—see them. Sign them.'

She read the words, and put a pencil in the trembling fingers, and, on the cover of a book Noreen's fingers traced her name slowly but clearly. Then Sheila thrust the paper in her bosom, and an instant later a nurse, sent by the resident doctor, entered.

'They cannot hang me or banish me, for my end has come,' whispered Noreen before Sheila left.

In the street of Spanish Town almost the first person Sheila saw was Dyck Calhoun. With pale, radiant look she went to him. He gazed at her strangely, for there was that in her face he could not understand. There was in it all the faith of years, all the truth of womanhood, all the splendour of discovery, all that which a man can see but once in a human face and be himself.

'Come with me,' she said, and she moved towards King's House. He obeyed. For some moments they walked in silence, then all at once under a magnolia tree she stopped.

'I want you to read what a woman wrote who has just arrived in the island from England. She is ill at the house of the general commanding.'

Taking from her breast the slip of paper, she handed it to him. He read it with eyes and senses that at first could hardly understand.

'God in heaven—oh, merciful God!' he said in great emotion, yet with a strange physical quiet.

'This woman was his wife,' Sheila said.

He handed the paper back. He conquered his agitation. The years of suffering rolled away. 'They'll put her in jail,' he said with a strange regret. He had a great heart.

'No, I think not,' was the reply. Yet she was touched by his compassion and thoughtfulness.

'Why?'

'Because she is going to die—and there is no time to lose. Come, we will go to Lord Mallow.'

'Mallow!' A look of bitter triumph came into Dyck's face. 'Mallow—at last!' he said.

Chapter XXIV

With the Governor

LORD MALLOW frowned on his secretary. 'Mr. Calhoun to see me! What's his business?'

'One can guess, your honour. He's been fighting for the island.'

'Why should he see me? There is the general commanding.'

The secretary did not reply, he knew his chief; and, after a moment, Lord Mallow said: 'Show him in.'

When Dyck Calhoun entered the governor gave him a wintry smile of welcome, but did not offer to shake hands. 'Will you sit down?' he said, with a slow gesture.

Calhoun made a dissenting motion. 'I prefer to stand, your honour.'

This was the first time the two men had met alone since Dyck had arrived in Jamaica, or since his trial. Calhoun was dressed in planter's costume, and the governor was in an officer's uniform. They were in striking contrast in face and figure—the governor long, lanky, ascetic in appearance, very intellectual save for the riotous mouth, and very spick and span —as though he had just stepped out of Almack's; while Calhoun was tough and virile, and with the air of a thorough outdoor man. There was in his face the firm fighting look of one who had done things and could tackle big affairs—and something more; there was in it quiet exultation. Here he was now at last alone with the man who had done him great harm, and for whom he had done so much; who had sought to wipe him off the slate of life and being; who had tried to win the girl from whom he himself had been parted.

In spite of it all—of his life in jail, of his stark mutiny, of the oppression of the governor, he had not been beaten down, but had prospered in spite of all. He had by his will, wisdom and military skill, saved the island in its hour of peril, saved its governor from condemnation; and here he was facing the worst enemy of his life with the cards of success in his hands.

'You have done the island and England great service, Mr. Calhoun,' said the governor at last.

'It is the least I could do for the land where I have made my home, where I have reaped more than I have sown.'

'We know your merit, sir.'

A sharp satirical look came into Calhoun's face and his voice rang out with vigour. 'And because you knew my merit you advised the Crown to confine me to my estate, and you would have had me shot if you could. I am what I am because there was a juster man than yourself in Jamaica. Through him I got away and found treasure, and I bought land and have helped to save this island and your place. What do I owe you, your honour? Nothing that I can see—nothing at all.'

'You are a mutineer, and but that you showed your courage would have been hung at the yard-arm, as many of your comrades in England were.'

A cold smile played at Calhoun's lips. 'My luck was as great as my courage, I know. I have the luck of Enniscorthy!'

At the last words the governor winced, for it was by that touch Calhoun had defeated him in the duel long ago. It galled him that this man whom he detested could say such things to him with truth. Yet in his heart of hearts he had for Calhoun a great respect. Calhoun's invincible will had conquered the worst in Mallow's nature, had, in spite of himself, created a new feeling in him. There was in Mallow the glimmer of greatness, and only his supreme selfishness had made him what he was. He laid a hand on himself now, though it was not easy to do so.

'It was not the luck of Enniscorthy that sent Erris Boyne to his doom,' he said, however, with anger in his mind, for Dyck's calm boldness stirred the worst in him. He thought he saw in him an exultancy which could only come from his late experiences in the field. It was as though he had come to triumph over the governor. Mallow said what he had said with malice. He looked to see rage in the face of Dyck Calhoun, and was nonplussed to find that it had only a stern sort of pleasure. The eyes of Calhoun met his with no trace of gloom, but with a valour worthy of a high cause—their clear blue facing his own with a constant penetration. Their intense sincerity gave him a feeling which did not belong to authority. It was not the look of a criminal, whatever the man might be—mutineer and murderer. As for mutineer, all that Calhoun had fought for had been at last admitted by the British Government, and reforms had been made that were due to the mutiny at the Nore. Only the technical crime had been done by Calhoun, and he had won pardon by his bravery in the battle at sea. Yes, he was a man of mark, even though a murderer.

Calhoun spoke slowly. 'Your honour, you have said what you have a right to say to a man who killed Erris Boyne. But this man you accuse did not do it.'

The governor smiled, for the assumption was ridiculous. He shrugged a shoulder and a sardonic curl came to his lip.

'Who did it then?'

'If you will come to the house of the general commanding you will see.'

The governor was in a great quandary. He gasped. 'The general commanding—did he kill Erris Boyne, then?'

'Not he, yet the person that did it is in this house. Listen, your honour. I have borne the name of killing Erris Boyne, and I ought to have killed him, for he was a traitor. I had proofs of it; but I did not kill him, and I did not betray him, for he had alive a wife and daughter, and something was due to them. He was a traitor, and was in league with the French. It does not matter that I tell you now, for his daughter knows the truth. I ought to have told it long ago, and if I had I should not have been imprisoned.'

'You were a brave man, but a fool—always a fool,' said the governor sharply.

'Not so great a fool that I can't recover from it,' was the calm reply. 'Perhaps it was the best thing that ever happened to me, for now I can look the world in the face. It's made a man of me. It was a woman killed him,' was Calhoun's added comment. 'Will your honour come with me and see her?'

The governor was thunderstruck. 'Where is she?'

'As I have told you—in the house of the general commanding.'

The governor rose abashed. 'Well, I can go there now. Come.'

'Perhaps you would prefer I should not go with you in the street. The world knows me as a mutineer, thinks of me as a murderer! Is it fair to your honour?'

Something in Calhoun's voice roused the rage of Lord Mallow, but he controlled it, and said calmly: 'Don't talk nonsense, sir; we shall walk together, if you will.'

At the entrance to the house of the general commanding, the man to whom this visit meant so much stopped and took a piece of paper from his pocket. 'Your honour, here is the name of the slayer of Erris Boyne. I give it to you now to see, so you may not be astonished when you see her.'

The governor stared at the paper. 'Boyne's wife, eh?' he said in a strange mood. 'Boyne's wife—what is she doing here?'

Calhoun told him briefly as he took the paper back, and added: 'It was accident that brought us all together here, your honour, but the hand of God is in it.'

'Is she very ill?'

'She will not live, I think.'

'To whom did she tell her story?'

'To Miss Sheila Llyn.'

The governor was nettled. 'Oh, to Miss Llyn! When did you see her?'

'Just before I came to you.'

'What did the woman look like—this Noreen Boyne?'

'I do not know; I have not seen her.'

'Then how came you by the paper with her signature?'

'Miss Llyn gave it to me.'

Anger filled Lord Mallow's mind. Sheila—why now the way would be open to Calhoun to win—to marry her! It angered him, but he held himself steadily.

'Where is Miss Llyn?'

'She is here, I think. She came back when she left me at your door.'

'Oh, she left you at my door, did she? . . . But let me see the woman that's come so far to put the world right.'

A few moments later they stood in the bedroom of Noreen Boyne, they two and Sheila Llyn, the nurse having been sent out.

Lord Mallow looked down on the haggard, dying woman with no emotion. Only a sense of duty moved him.

'What is it you wished to say to me?' he asked the patient.

'Who are you?' came the response in a frayed tone.

'I am the governor of the island—Lord Mallow.'

'Then I want to tell you that I killed Erris Boyne—with this hand I killed him.' She raised her skinny hand up, and her eyes became glazed. 'He had used me vilely and I struck him down. He was a bad man.'

'You let an innocent man bear punishment, you struck at one who did you no harm, and you spoiled his life for him. You can see that, can't you?'

The woman's eyes sought the face of Dyck Calhoun, and Calhoun said: 'No, you did not spoil my life, Noreen Boyne. You have made it. Not that I should have chosen the way of making it, but there it is, as God's in heaven, I forgive you.'

Noreen's face lost some of its gloom. 'That makes it easier,' she said brokenly. 'I can't atone by any word or act, but I'm sorry. I've kept you from being happy, and you were born to be happy. Your father had hurt mine, had turned him out of our house for debt, and I tried to pay it all back. When they suspected you I held my peace. I was a coward; I could not say you were innocent without telling the truth, and that I could not do then. But now I'll tell it—I think I'd have told it whether I was dying or not, though. Yes, if I'd seen you here I'd have told it, I'm sure. I'm not all bad.'

Sheila leaned over the bed. 'Never mind about the past. You can help a man back to the good opinion of the world now.'

'I hurt you too,' said Noreen with hopeless pain. 'You were his friend.'

'I believed in him always—even when he did not deny the crime,' was the quiet reply.

'There's no good going on with that,' said the governor sharply. 'We must take down her statement in writing, and then——'

'Look, she is sinking!' said Calhoun sharply.

The woman's head had dropped forward, her chin was on her breast, and her hands became clenched.

'The doctor at once—bring in the nurse,' said Calhoun. 'She's dying.'

An instant later, the nurse entered with Sheila, and in a short time the doctor came.

When later the doctor saw Lord Mallow alone he said: 'She can't live more than two days.'

'That's good for her in a way,' answered the governor, and in reply to the doctor's question why, he said: 'Because she'd be in prison.'

'In prison—has she broken the law?'

'She is now under arrest, though she doesn't know it.'

'What was her crime, your honour?'

'She killed a man.'

'What man?'

'Him for whom Dyck Calhoun was sent to prison—Erris Boyne.'

'Mr. Calhoun was not guilty, then?'

'No. As soon as the woman is dead, I mean to announce the truth.'

'Not till then, your honour?'

'Not till then.'

'It's hard on Calhoun.'

'Is it? It's years since he was tried and condemned. Two days cannot matter now.'

'Perhaps not. Last night the woman said to me: "I'm glad I'm going to die."' Then he added: 'Calhoun will be more popular than ever now.'

The governor winced.

Chapter XXV *Then What Happened*

AN hour after Noreen Boyne had been laid in her grave, there was a special issue of the principal paper telling all the true facts of the death of Erris Boyne. Thus the people of Jamaica came to know that Dyck Calhoun was innocent of the crime of killing Erris Boyne, and he was made the object of splashing admiration, and was almost mobbed by admirers in the street. It all vexed Lord Mallow; but he steeled himself to urbanity, and he played his part well. He was clever enough to see it would pay him to be outwardly gracious to Calhoun. So it was he made a speech in the capital on the return of the general commanding and the troops from subduing the Maroons, in which he said: 'No one in all the king's dominions had showed greater patriotism and military skill than their friend Mr. Dyck Calhoun, who had been harshly treated by a mistaken Government.'

A few hours later, in the sweet garden of the house where Sheila and her mother lodged, Calhoun came upon the girl whose gentle dignity and beauty seemed to glow.

At first all she said to him was, 'Welcome, old friend,' and at last she said, 'Now you can come to the United States, Dyck, and make a new life there.'

Presently he said: 'I ought to go where you wish me to go, for you came to me here when I was rejected of men. I owe you whatever I am that's worth while, if anything that I am is worth while. Your faith kept me alive in my darkest days—even when I thought I had wronged you.'

'Then you will come to Virginia with me—as my husband, Dyck?' She blushed and laughed. 'You see I have to propose to you, for you've never asked me to marry you. I'm throwing myself at your head, sir, you observe!'

He gave an honest smile of adoration. 'I came to-day to ask you to be my wife—for that reason only. I could not do it till the governor had declared my innocence. The earth is sweeter to-day than it has been since time began.'

He held out his arms, and an instant later the flowers she carried were crushed to her breast, with her lips given to his.

A little later she drew from her pocket a letter. 'You must read that,' she said. 'It is from the great Alexander Hamilton—yes, he will be great, he will play a wondrous part in the life of my new country. Read it Dyck.'

After he had read it, he said: 'He was born a British subject here in these islands, and he goes to help Americans live according to British principles. With all my sane fellow-countrymen I am glad the Americans succeeded. Do you go to your Virginia, and I will come as soon as I have put my affairs in order.'

'I will not go without you—no, I will not go,' she persisted.

'Then we shall be married at once,' he declared.

And so it was, and all the island was *en fête*, and when Sheila came to Dyck's plantation the very earth seemed to rejoice. The slaves went wild with joy, and ate and drank their fill, and from every field there came the song:

'Hold up yo hands,
Hold up yo hands,
Bress de Lord for de milk and honey!
De big bees is a singin',
My heart is held up and de bells is a ringin';
Hold up yo hands,
Hold up yo hands!'

And sweetly solitary the two lived their lives, till one day, three months later, there came to the plantation the governor and his suite.

When they had dismounted, Lord Mallow said: 'I bring you the pay of the British Government for something of what you have suffered, sir, and what will give your lady pay too, I hope. I come with a baronetcy given by the king. News of it came to me only this morning.'

Calhoun smiled. 'Your honour, I can take no title, I can receive no honour. I have ended my life under the British flag. I go to live under the Stars and Stripes.'

The governor was astounded. 'Your lady, sir, do you forget your lady?'

But Sheila answered: 'The life of the new world has honours which have naught to do with titles, and I will remain as I am.'

'I sail for Virginia by the first ship that goes,' said Calhoun. 'It is good here, but I shall go to a place where things are better, and where I shall have work to do. I must decline the baronetcy, your honour. I go to a land where the field of life is larger, where Britain shall remake herself.'

'It will take some time,' said the governor tartly. 'They'll be long apart.'

'But they will come together at last—for the world's sake.'

There was silence for a moment, and through it came the joy-chant from the fields:

'Hold up yo hands,
Hold up yo hands,
Bress de Lord for de milk and honey——'

THE END

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